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ABSTRACT

In response to increasing concerns about preparing young children to succeed in the primary grades, many states have increased their investment in prekindergarten programs over the past decade. Noting that increased demand for prekindergarten education coincides with a staffing shortage in the early care and education, this study documented the current state of staff qualifications, stability, turnover, and compensation in state-funded prekindergarten programs and identified conditions under which prekindergarten initiatives promote a more skilled, more stable, and better compensated workforce. A sample of programs in California, Georgia, Illinois (Chicago only), New York, and Texas were selected for the study. Prekindergarten staffing in each state was profiled, and comparisons between publicly-operated and privately-operated programs were made. Comparisons yielded five major findings: (1) publicly-operated program teaching staff had higher educational qualifications than staff in privately-operated programs; (2) publicly-operated program teaching staff received higher pay and benefits than teaching staff in privately-operated programs; (3) there was greater teaching staff stability in publicly-operated prekindergarten programs than in privately-operated programs; (4) publicly-operated and privately-operated programs appeared to be evolving into separate segments of a two-tier prekindergarten system; and (5) prekindergarten programs have had mixed success in integrating teaching staff into existing service delivery systems. Policy implications and recommendations related to setting equal standards for all settings within states' prekindergarten service delivery systems, integrating prekindergarten programs more fully into the larger public or private systems, providing adequate director training, and ensuring appropriate support for teachers in meeting state prekindergarten training requirements. (An explanation of the study design and methodology is appended. Contains 25 references.) (KB)

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# Inside the Pre-K Classroom: A Study of Staffing and Stability in State-Funded Prekindergarten Programs.

Center for the Child Care Workforce

Dan Bellm, Alice Burton, Marcy Whitebook, Linda Broatch, and Marci P. Young

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# Inside the Pre-K Classroom: A Study of Staffing and Stability In State-Funded Prekindergarten Programs

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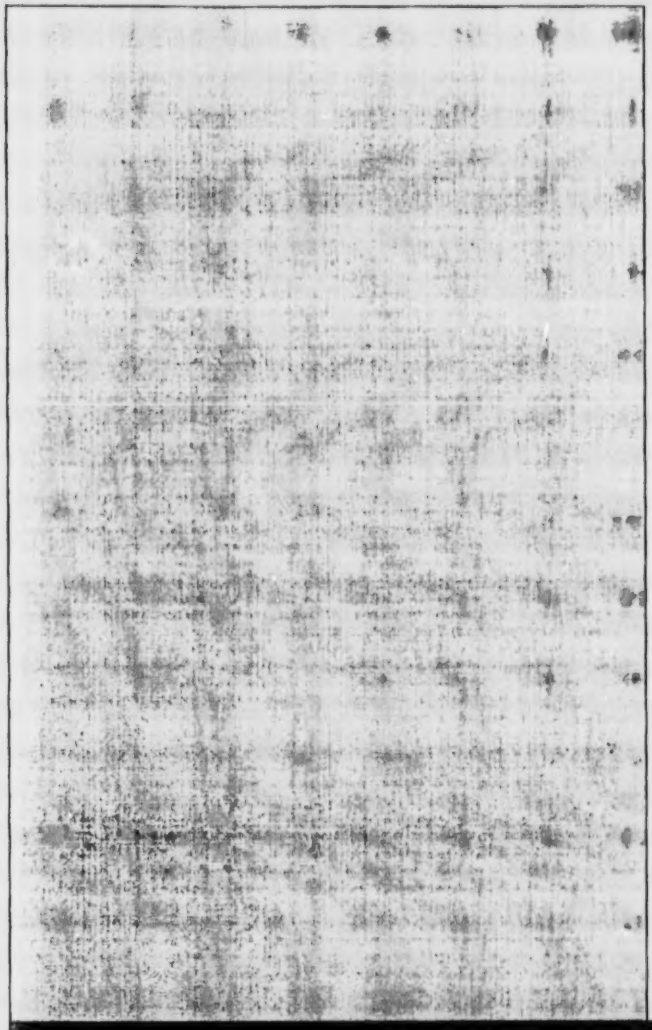
*The Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW)*, founded in 1978, is a nonprofit resource, education and advocacy organization committed to improving child care quality by upgrading the compensation, working conditions and training of child care teachers and family child care providers. The Center for the Child Care Workforce advocates for fair and decent employment for caregivers; affordable, quality care for families; and a greater investment of public funds into our nation's child care system. CCW's goal is to create a unified and powerful voice for the child care workforce. As this report went to press, CCW was in the process of ending as a freestanding, Washington, DC-based organization and transferring many of its activities and functions to another organization. Further information about CCW's plans were unavailable at press time and will be released in Fall 2002.

*The Institute of Industrial Relations (IIR)* is an Organized Research Unit of the University of California at Berkeley. IIR brings together faculty from several academic departments and supports multi-disciplinary research about labor and employment relations. IIR sponsors numerous community service programs, including the Center for Labor Research and Education, the Labor Project for Working Families, and the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. IIR publishes the widely respected academic journal, *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society*, and houses an important research library that collects and preserves a wide array of information about work, organizations and labor issues.



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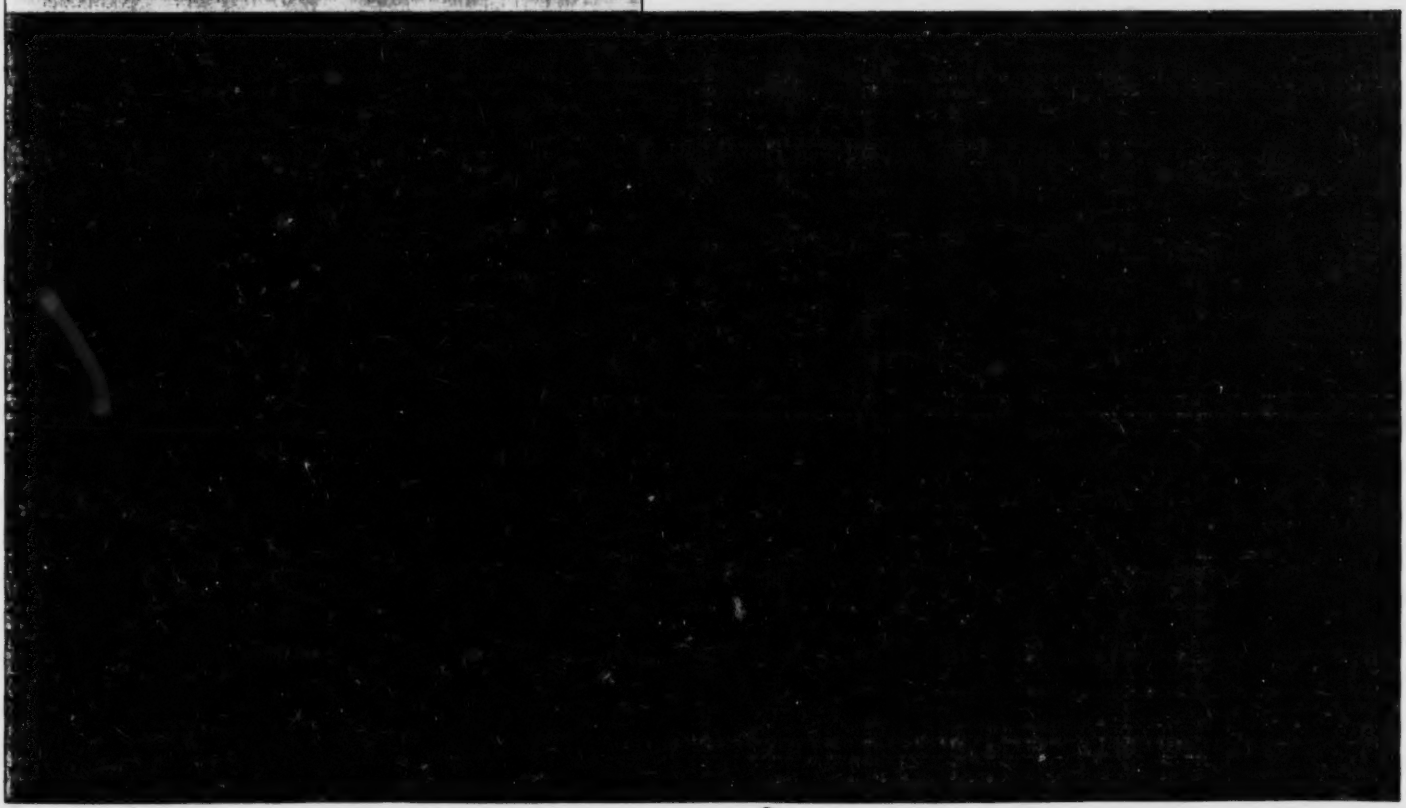


# Highlights of the Study

The present study aims to document the current state of staff qualifications, stability, turnover and compensation in state-funded prekindergarten programs, and to identify the conditions under which Pre-K initiatives promote a more skilled and stable, and better compensated, early care and education workforce. We selected a sample of programs in five states: California, Georgia, Illinois (Chicago only), New York and Texas. In addition to profiling Pre-K staffing in each state, we have also explored variations in staffing among Pre-K programs housed in different auspices, including publicly-operated programs (based in public school districts or community colleges) and privately-operated programs (based in community-based nonprofit agencies or for-profit organizations).

Most Pre-K research to date has focused on describing program content, identifying recipients of services, or assessing educational outcomes, without addressing how to recruit, train and retain the workforce necessary to implement such programs effectively. To begin this project, the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW) conducted a preliminary survey of state Pre-K program administrators that found wide variations among the states in terms of these staffing issues.

Given the rapid expansion of prekindergarten programs at the state level, the current national staffing crisis in early childhood care and education, and the heightened interest among politicians and policy makers in making prekindergarten education universally available, CCW conducted the present study to obtain more in-depth data that can inform a variety of Pre-K policy, planning and assessment efforts.

**Finding 1:** ***Teaching staff in publicly-operated prekindergarten programs had higher educational qualifications than staff in privately-operated programs.***

**Finding 2:** ***Teaching staff in publicly-operated prekindergarten programs received higher pay and benefits than teaching staff in privately-operated programs.***

**Finding 3:** ***There was greater teaching staff stability in publicly-operated prekindergarten programs than in privately-operated programs.***

Study data revealed that program auspice — that is, whether a prekindergarten program was publicly- or privately-operated — was strongly associated with differences in the qualifications, compensation and stability of prekindergarten teachers. Specifically, our results showed that teachers employed in public school-operated or other publicly-operated Pre-K programs in the five study sites — California, Chicago, Georgia, New York and Texas — generally had attained more formal education, received higher wages and benefits, and experienced greater job stability than did their counterparts in privately-operated, nonprofit or for-profit programs.

In general, educational qualifications, compensation and stability of teachers in publicly-operated prekindergartens more closely resembled those of teachers in grades K-12, while community-based, privately-operated prekindergarten programs tended to reflect the lower qualifications, lower compensation and higher staff turnover associated with the child care teaching workforce. Teachers in public school-operated California prekindergartens (State Preschools) were the notable exception, having attained significantly lower qualifications than those of their K-12 colleagues – largely because of lower requirements – and earning correspondingly lower average salaries.

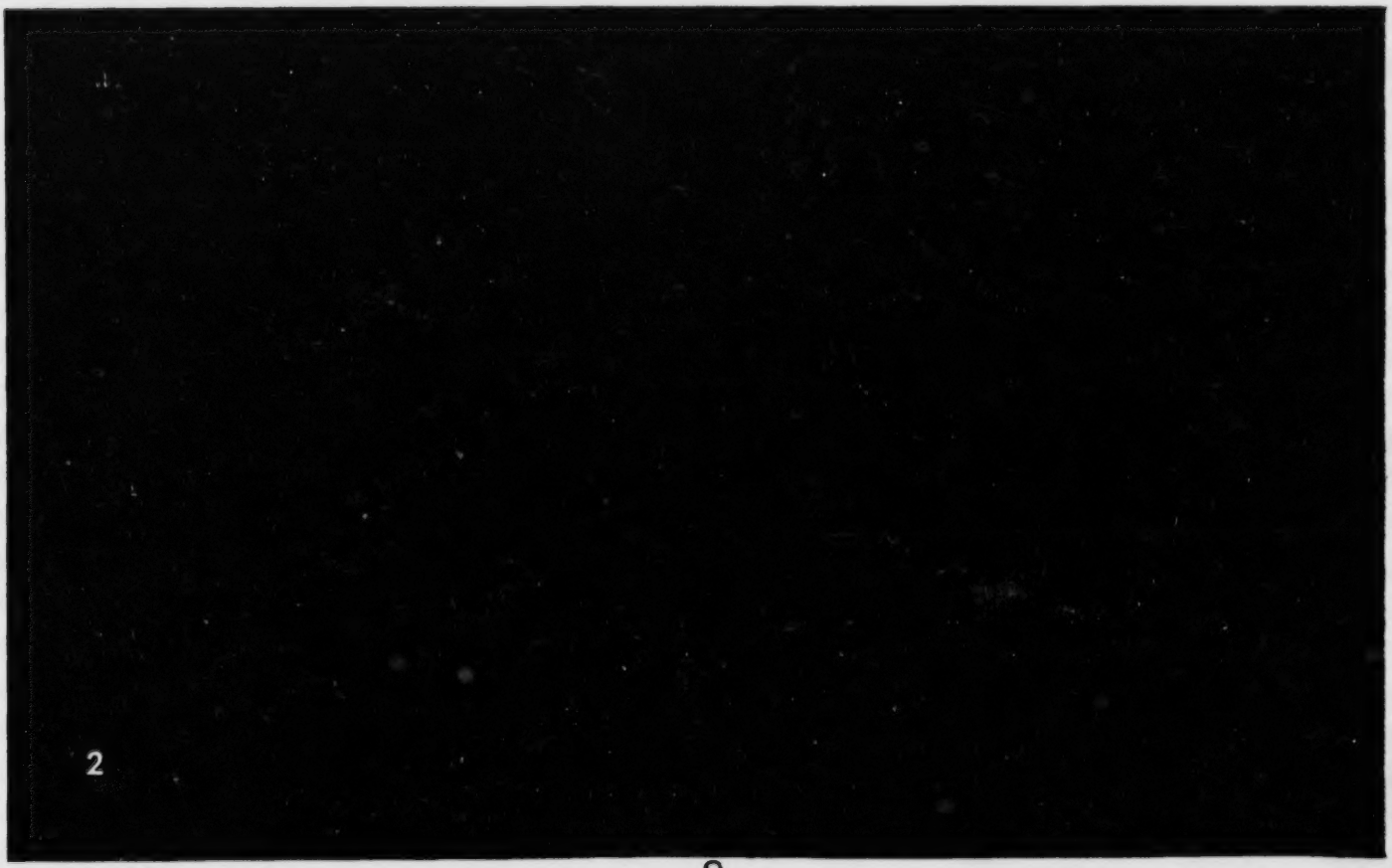
In all five states in our study, at least some prekindergarten programs were publicly operated, most often through school districts. The proportion of prekindergarten programs operated under public auspices varied by state, with Texas and Illinois operating public school-based programs almost exclusively, and California, Georgia and New York administering a mixture of publicly- and privately-operated programs. States in our study represented diverse regions of the country; encompassed urban, suburban and rural areas; and represented a range of per-pupil funding. Across these variations, however, public program auspices were generally associated with better teacher qualifications, wages, benefits and job stability. This correlation did not hold as strongly for assistant teachers or directors.

**Finding 4:** ***Publicly-operated and privately-operated programs appeared to be evolving into separate segments of a two-tier prekindergarten system.***

As a result of these substantial differences in qualifications and compensation of prekindergarten teaching staff across auspices, evidence was clear that a two-tier system of prekindergarten education was developing in the four states that housed both publicly- and privately-operated programs. Privately-operated programs, in effect, often appeared to serve as training and apprenticeship programs to prepare teachers for eventual employment in the higher-paying, publicly-operated programs.

**Finding 5:** ***Prekindergarten programs, both publicly- and privately-operated, have had mixed success in integrating their teaching staff into existing service delivery systems.***

Whether early childhood educators were working in publicly- or privately-operated programs, integration of prekindergarten teachers with other site staff also presented particular challenges. This had implications not only for teachers' sense of professional self-esteem, but for how fully they could take advantage of opportunities for professional development and career advancement.



# Introduction

Across the country, policy makers, educators and parents are increasingly concerned about how to prepare young children adequately to learn and succeed in kindergarten and the primary grades. School readiness has been identified as one of the nation's top five educational goals (National Educational Goals Panel, 1998). In response, many states have substantially increased their investment in prekindergarten programs over the past decade — spending roughly $1 billion in public funds between 1991 and 1999, and tripling the number of children served during that period from 250,000 to 750,000 (Schulman, Blank & Ewen, 1999). Thirty-nine states currently invest to some degree in prekindergarten programs, with several states implementing "universal" efforts intended to reach all four-year-old children.

Spurring the creation of many prekindergarten (or "Pre-K") programs is the substantial gap in school readiness between children living in poverty and those in more affluent homes. Judges in Arkansas, New Jersey and North Carolina, for example, citing school districts' failure to meet their states' constitutional guarantee of an adequate education for every child, have ordered the schools to offer prekindergarten education to all disadvantaged children (Child Care Action Campaign, 2002). The Pew Charitable Trusts recently contributed $15 million toward research and policy advocacy to promote universal prekindergarten for all three- and four-year-olds in the United States. The Committee for Economic Development, a coalition of business leaders, has also called for prekindergarten education for all U.S. children, and for an investment of federal funds to make this goal a reality (Committee for Economic Development, 2002).

The large-scale development of prekindergarten programs, however, is still in its beginning stages. Even in states that call their Pre-K efforts "universal," relatively small numbers of targeted children are actually being served, most likely due to inadequate levels of funding or uncertain continuity of funding from year to year. (See Table 1 and 2.)

Although many prekindergarten programs began with the single goal of providing educational enrichment for four-year-olds, they are now facing a broader range of social and economic issues that are linked to the care of young children. While most Pre-K programs operate on a half-day basis, there is a growing need among families for full-day child care as former welfare recipients and increasing numbers of women with young children enter the workforce. Prekindergarten programs are being increasingly challenged to offer not only a high-quality learning environment for children, but also to care for children during parents' work hours and to provide a sustainable income for teachers, many of whom are also the working parents of young children.

States have defined prekindergarten education in a variety of ways, reflecting the varied histories of how such programs have been developed, targeted, housed and staffed in different parts of the country. Some states define their Pre-K programs as "universal" — available to all children of a certain age, regardless of family income — while others target their efforts to a low-income or otherwise at-risk population. Some have housed their prekindergarten programs entirely in the public schools, while others use a combination of public schools, community agencies, and in some cases, for-profit child care businesses. All define their Pre-K efforts in terms of an educational focus, and most offer half-day sessions that coincide with the K-12 school year; relatively few offer full-day or full-year programs.

Unfortunately, the increased demand for prekindergarten education coincides with a staffing crisis in the field of early care and education, as well as widespread teacher shortages in grades K-12, prompting concerns about how prekindergarten systems will be able to expand and secure a stable, well-qualified workforce. Research has consistently found that the presence of stable, well-trained and well-compensated providers is the key to program quality in early care and education. Several studies have conclu-

sively linked greater staffing stability in this field with higher wages (Cost, Quality & Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995; Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990; Whitebook, Sakai & Howes, 1997; Whitebook, Sakai, Gerber & Howes, 2001; Phillips, Mekos, Scarr, McCartney & Abbott-Shim, 2000). Greater staff stability, in turn, has been linked to better educational and developmental outcomes for children, with particular benefits cited for poor children and those at risk for educational underperformance (Peisner-Feinberg, 1999; Cost, Quality & Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995; Schweinhart, Barnes & Weikart, 1992).

But nationwide, states are experiencing a shortage of early childhood teachers, with annual turnover rates of approximately 30 percent – far higher than the 6.6 percent annual turnover among teachers in grades K-12 (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Class size reduction policies in a number of states are also increasing the demand for kindergarten and elementary school teachers, further drawing many of the most skilled and trained early care and education practitioners away from working with young children and into kindergarten or primary grade classrooms. As the number of prekindergarten programs continues to increase, there is rising uncertainty about whether this expansion will help strengthen and stabilize the early care and education workforce, or will add to its current crisis of low wages, declining qualifications and high staff turnover (Whitebook et al., 2001).

## About This Study

The present study aims to document the current state of staff qualifications, stability, turnover and compensation in state-funded prekindergarten programs, and to identify the conditions under which Pre-K initiatives promote a more skilled and stable, and better compensated, early care and education workforce. We selected a sample of programs in five states: California, Georgia, Illinois (Chicago only), New York and Texas. In addition to profiling Pre-K staffing in each state, we have also explored variations in staffing among Pre-K programs housed in different auspices, including publicly-operated programs (based in public school districts or community colleges) and privately-operated programs (based in community-based nonprofit agencies or for-profit organizations).

> For the purposes of this study, we define *prekindergarten programs* as publicly-funded, academically focused programs with the explicit goal of preparing young children for success in kindergarten and elementary school.
>
> We also use the term *auspice* to refer to the legal status and ownership of a prekindergarten program; in this study, two types of program auspice are compared: "publicly operated" (including school district-based and community college-based programs) and "privately operated" (including programs based in nonprofit agencies and for-profit businesses).

Most Pre-K research to date has focused on describing program content, identifying recipients of services, or assessing educational outcomes, without addressing how to recruit, train and retain the workforce necessary to implement such programs effectively. To begin this project, the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW) conducted a preliminary survey of state Pre-K program administrators that found wide variations among the states in terms of these staffing issues.

Given the rapid expansion of prekindergarten programs at the state level, the current national staffing crisis in early childhood care and education, and the heightened interest among politicians and policy makers in making prekindergarten education universally available, CCW conducted the present study to obtain more in-depth data that can inform a variety of Pre-K policy, planning and assessment efforts.

***The goals of the study are:***

1. to describe in greater depth than previously documented the variations among state prekindergarten programs, as found in five states, with respect to program structure and to staff qualifications, compensation levels and stability;
2. to identify the most significant elements of success in recruiting and retaining a skilled prekindergarten workforce;
3. to make recommendations, based on study findings, for future prekindergarten program policy, particularly as related to the workforce.

***With these goals in mind, we formulated the following primary research questions for the study:***

- ***To what extent are state prekindergarten programs recruiting and retaining skilled teaching staff?*** To answer this question, we investigated teacher and director qualifications defined by each program, then looked for the degree of match between required and actual qualifications of current staff. We also inquired about rates of staff turnover, and how easy or difficult it is to replace teachers and assistant teachers who leave.

- ***To what extent do programs have in place the key staffing elements associated with quality (stability, high levels of staff education, and adequate compensation), and does this vary by program auspices?*** Most states deliver prekindergarten programs in a combination of school-district and community-based settings; in such states, what are the challenges faced by each auspice in recruiting and retaining qualified staff? Does recruitment and retention under each auspice affect recruitment and retention under the others, and if so, how? In states that house prekindergarten programs primarily in the public schools, and where Pre-K teachers are paid at or near parity with elementary school teachers, are staffing issues more or less difficult than in programs with different auspices and compensation structures?

- ***What other effects have prekindergarten and staff had on the states' early care and education systems?*** For example, when state-funded Pre-K services are brought under the auspices of community-based child care programs, has this resulted in better conditions and increased compensation for other (non-Pre-K) community-based child care teachers and providers? When Pre-K is housed in the public schools, to what extent are school district prekindergarten staff integrated into the district's K-12 school system, work environment and personnel policies?

To investigate these questions, we conducted interviews with Pre-K site administrators between spring 2001 and winter 2002. To explore key findings from the survey in greater depth, we also convened focus groups and conducted individual interviews with directors, teaching staff and state-level administrators in Chicago and Georgia in winter 2002.

The four states and one city in the study were selected with the aim of providing a representative cross-section of prekindergarten efforts nationwide according to several major variables:

- ***Funding levels and number of children served.*** All five states had experienced substantial growth in Pre-K funding levels and number of children served over the last decade. Two states, Georgia and New York, had implemented new "universal" prekindergarten efforts in 1995 and 1997 respectively, aiming to serve all four-year-old children in the state and thus requiring particularly rapid growth in programs and staffing. New York's Experimental Prekindergarten Program (EPK), an older school district-based program that has grown only modestly over the last decade, was also included to permit comparisons with the state's Universal Prekindergarten Program (UPK). (See Tables 1 and 2.)

- ***State policies regarding staff qualifications and compensation.*** We hypothesized that variations in such policies would influence staff characteristics, salaries and benefits. Texas, for example, requires Pre-K teachers to have completed a

bachelor's degree and credential, whereas California requires only the completion of certain credit-bearing early childhood education courses. (See Table 3.)

- ***Program auspices.*** Each of the study sites offered a unique vantage point on differences in staffing between Pre-K programs offered by public school districts and those offered by community-based nonprofit agencies or for-profit organizations. Our sample includes states that contract Pre-K services exclusively with public school districts (Texas), those that contract with a combination of school districts and community-based nonprofit agencies (California and Illinois), and those that contract with a wider range of program auspices (Georgia). Of New York's two separate efforts, the Experimental Prekindergarten Program (EPK) is operated exclusively through the public schools, and the newer Universal Prekindergarten Program (UPK) is operated in a variety of settings.

The following chapters present a summary of study findings, followed by detailed accounts of findings in the five states. For further information about study design and methodology, including sampling and analysis strategies, see the Appendix.

Table 1: Recent Growth in State Prekindergarten Programs: Five-State Sample

| | Increase in State Spending between 1991-92 and 1998-99 | Number of Children Served, 1998-1999 | Number of Children Served, 2001-2002 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **California** | 52% | 65,200* | 100,000* |
| **Georgia** | new program | 61,000 | 63,500 |
| **Illinois** | 90% | 50,000 | 55,000 |
| **New York Universal Prekindergarten** | new program | 18,906 | 72,490 |
| **New York Experimental Prekindergarten** | 7% | 19,458 | |
| **Texas** | 30% | 123,859 | 148,888 |

Sources: Schulman, Blank & Ewen, 1999; Education Week, 2002.

* California figures are for available prekindergarten slots, not for children served; due to child turnover, the numbers of children served in these years may be 10-15% higher.



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| Table 2: Children Served by Pre-K Programs as Percentage of Preschool Population | |
|---|---|
| **State** | **Children Served** |
| **California** | 11% of 3- to 4-year-olds |
| **Georgia** | 53% of 4-year-olds |
| **Illinois** | 10% of 3- to 5-year-olds |
| **New York EPK** | 2% of 3- to 5-year-olds |
| **New York UPK** | 21% of 4-year-olds |
| **Texas*** | 46% of 4-year-olds<br>23% of 3- to 4-year-olds |

*Program designed for 4-year-olds, but school districts may extend to 3-year-olds after all eligible 4-year-olds have been served

| Table 3: Variation in Study States: Educational Requirements | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **State Minimum Requirements for Pre-Service Education of Pre-K Teachers (as of 2001-2002)** | **Auspices of Programs Providing State-Funded Pre-K Services** |
| **California** | 24 college credits in Early Childhood Education, plus 16 college credits in General Education | School districts, community-based nonprofits |
| **Georgia** | Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate | School districts, community- based nonprofits, for-profits |
| **Illinois** | Bachelor's degree and Early Childhood Education certificate | School districts, community-based nonprofits |
| **New York** | Bachelor's degree and New York state teaching certificate | School districts, community-based nonprofits |
| **Texas** | Bachelor's degree, teaching certificate, and Early Childhood or Kindergarten Endorsement | School districts |

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# Overview of Study Findings

Study data revealed that program auspice — that is, whether a prekindergarten program was publicly- or privately-operated — was strongly associated with differences in the qualifications, compensation and stability of prekindergarten teachers. Specifically, our results showed that teachers employed in public school-operated or other publicly-operated Pre-K programs in the five study sites—California, Chicago, Georgia, New York and Texas—generally had attained more formal education, received higher wages and benefits, and experienced greater job stability than did their counterparts in privately-operated, nonprofit or for-profit programs.

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In all five states in our study, at least some prekindergarten programs were publicly operated, most often through school districts. The proportion of prekindergarten programs operated under public auspices varied by state, with Texas and Illinois operating public school-based programs almost exclusively, and California, Georgia and New York administering a mixture of publicly and privately-operated programs. States in our study represented diverse regions of the country; encompassed urban, suburban and rural areas; and represented a range of per-pupil funding. Across these variations, however, public program auspices were generally associated with better teacher qualifications, wages, benefits and job stability. This relationship was not as strong for assistant teachers or directors.

As a result of these substantial differences in qualifications and compensation of prekindergarten teaching staff across auspices, evidence was clear that a two-tier system of prekindergarten education was developing in the four states that housed both publicly- and privately-operated programs. Privately-operated programs, in effect, often appeared to serve as training and apprenticeship programs to prepare teachers for eventual employment in the higher-paying publicly-operated programs.

This study uses the following definitions for staff: *Teachers* are persons in charge of a group or classroom of children, often with staff supervisory responsibilities. This category includes "head" or "lead" teachers. *Assistant teachers* are persons working with children in a classroom under the supervision of a teacher. *Teaching staff* includes all staff persons who provide direct care to children, including teacher-directors, teachers and assistant teachers. *Directors* are the administrative heads of Pre-K sites who oversee center operations, including center finances, staff salaries, turnover and related matters. In some cases, directors (or "teacher-directors") may have classroom responsibilities along with administrative tasks.

Whether early childhood educators were working in publicly- or privately-operated programs, integration of prekindergarten teachers with other site staff also presented particular challenges. This had implications not only for teachers' sense of professional self-esteem, but for how fully they could take advantage of opportunities for professional development and career advancement. In public schools, substantial attention and initiative on the part of principals was required to ensure that prekindergarten teachers were viewed as professional equals by their K-12 colleagues. In privately-run, community-based programs, on the other hand, prekindergarten teachers whose programs received state funding were often better-paid and had access to more resources than their on-site colleagues who worked with children from birth to age five, or with school-age children in before- and after-school programs. In these settings, site administrators had to make conscious efforts to counteract potential feelings of competitiveness and resentment between colleagues who had similar levels of responsibility but different wages and working conditions.

The five major study findings are presented below, and are also analyzed in greater detail in the five state reports that follow.

## Finding 1

***Teaching staff in publicly-operated prekindergarten programs had higher educational qualifications than staff in privately-operated programs.***

All five states in which this study was conducted have set educational requirements for prekindergarten staff that are identical whether staff are employed in publicly- or privately-operated programs.[1] Nevertheless, we found that the actual educational attainment of teachers varies significantly by auspice, with dramatically higher levels of education among teachers in publicly-operated programs.

Overall, prekindergarten teachers in our sample who were employed in publicly-operated programs met or exceeded their state's minimum pre-service educational requirements. Among privately-operated programs, however, only in Chicago did a majority of teachers in our sample exceed the minimum requirements. It is notable that in no study site did 100 percent of the prekindergarten teachers in our sample – in either privately- or publicly-operated programs – meet the minimum pre-service requirements. As pre-service education requirements for Pre-K staff rose – for example, in Chicago, Georgia and New York – there was concern that fewer and fewer prospective teachers would meet those requirements unless there was a concerted effort to provide more training (and funding) than was currently available.

In some geographic areas, access to training had particular challenges, as one prekindergarten director in a rural California county pointed out: "Salaries are too low in this very rural and isolated county to provide an incentive to commute 50-60 miles to the nearest college to earn minimum early childhood education requirements, or even to commute to work. We arranged one class per year at the local high school, but it is not enough. The district doesn't kick in funding."

### Teachers

Lowest among the five states in pre-service education requirements were Georgia, which required prekindergarten teachers to have completed only a one-year certificate program, and California, where teachers were required to have 24 units of college-level early childhood education courses and 16 general education units – 20 credits fewer than the 60 required for a two-year associate degree.

In spite of the low requirements, 82% of teachers in California's publicly-operated prekindergarten programs had earned at least an associate degree, and 30 percent had earned at least a bachelor's. In California's privately-operated programs, however, just eight percent of teachers had attained at least an associate degree. In Georgia, where state per-child reimbursement for prekindergarten programs is indexed to staff educational attainment, and where school districts can require higher qualifications than those set by

the state, fully 93% of teachers in publicly-operated programs in our sample had earned at least a bachelor's degree. By contrast, only about one-half of their counterparts in privately-operated programs had attained at least a bachelor's degree.

In Chicago, New York (except for privately-operated UPK programs) and Texas, prekindergarten teachers were required to have attained at least a bachelor's degree and prekindergarten credential, and in New York, teachers were also required to have earned a master's degree by the time they completed five years of teaching. In publicly-operated programs in Chicago, 99 percent of teachers had attained at least a bachelor's, and 70 percent had attained a credential, whereas in privately-operated programs, only 66 percent of teachers had earned the required bachelor's degree. In Texas, where our sample consisted exclusively of public school-operated programs, 97 percent of teachers had earned at least a bachelor's degree, and 89 percent had earned a prekindergarten or other teaching credential. In New York, some 89 percent of teachers in publicly-operated programs had earned at least a bachelor's and a prekindergarten or other teaching credential; 77 percent of teachers in publicly-operated prekindergarten programs had also attained a master's. By contrast, only 38 percent of private-sector prekindergarten teachers in New York had earned a bachelor's degree. This low percentage of teachers who met the minimum education requirements is especially problematic, since, beginning with the 2002-03 school year, teachers in New York's privately-operated Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) programs will be required to have not only a bachelor's degree but a credential.

The five states we studied did not appear to have consistent policies toward Pre-K staff who had not attained the minimum educational requirements. California, for one, offers temporary waivers while staff complete their education, but others have no definite policy in place for situations in which teachers are working without the minimally required course work, credentials or diplomas.

| Table 1: Educational Attainment of Pre-K Teachers, by Program Auspice | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **STATE** | **Pre-Service Requirements for Publicly-Funded Prekindergarten Programs** | **Teachers in PUBLICLY- OPERATED Programs** | **Teachers in PRIVATELY- OPERATED Programs** |
| **California** | 24 college-level units of early childhood education courses, plus 16 general education units* (less than an AA) | At least an AA: 82%<br>At least a BA: 30% | At least an AA: 8% |
| **Georgia** | One-year certification course** | At least a BA: 93%<br>Certification: 70% | *Nonprofit*<br>At least a BA: 48%<br>Certification: 41%<br>*For-Profit*<br>At least a BA: 56%<br>Certification: 41% |
| **Illinois (Chicago)** | BA and Pre-K credential | At least a BA: 99%<br>ECE/Pre-K or Other Credential: 70% | At least a BA: 66%<br>ECE/Pre-K or Other Credential: 57% |
| **New York (EPK)** | BA and credential; MA after 5 years | At least a BA: 100%<br>At least a BA and Credential: 89%<br>At least an MA: 77% | NA |
| **New York (UPK)** | *Publicly-Operated Programs:*<br>BA and credential; MA after 5 years<br>*Privately-Operated Programs:*<br>BA; MA after 5 years | At least a BA: 100%<br>ECE/Pre-K or Other Credential: 94%<br>At least an MA: 72% | *Nonprofit****<br>At least a BA: 89%<br>At least an MA: 38%<br>*For-Profit****<br>At least a BA: 100%<br>At least an MA: 38% |
| **Texas** | BA and Pre-K credential | At least a BA: 97%<br>ECE/Pre-K or Other Credential: 89% | NA |

* In California, "associate teachers" who have only 12 units are eligible to teach in State Preschool Programs in an emergency capacity.

** Minimum requirements will increase to an associate degree in 2002-2003. Teachers with Montessori Diplomas are exempted from the AA degree requirement.

*** Beginning in the 2002-2003 school year, UPK teachers in privately-operated programs will be required to hold a BA and a credential, and an MA after 5 years.

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Table 2: Educational Attainment of Pre-K Assistant Teachers, by Program Auspice

| STATE | Pre-Service Requirements for Publicly-Funded Prekindergarten Programs | Assistant Teachers in PUBLICLY-OPERATED Programs | Assistant Teachers in PRIVATELY-OPERATED Programs |
|---|---|---|---|
| **California** | None | At least an AA: 18% | At least an AA: 0% |
| **Georgia** | High School Graduation | At least an AA: 47% | At least an AA: 9% |
| **Illinois (Chicago)** | High School Graduation | At least an AA: 32% | At least an AA: 51% |
| **New York (EPK)** | High School Graduation; 6 college-level early childhood education units | At least an AA: 21% (No data available on those attaining at least 6 units) | NA |
| **New York (UPK)** | Same as EPK | At least an AA: 34% (No data available on those attaining at least 6 units) | *Nonprofit* At least an AA: 28% *For-Profit* At least an AA: 44% |
| **Texas** | High School Graduation | At least an AA: 0% At least a BA: 0% At least an MA: 3% | NA |

### Assistant teachers

The level of formal education among assistant teachers in Pre-K programs in all five study sites was notably low. In all sites except Chicago and Georgia, fewer than one-third of prekindergarten assistant teachers in either publicly- or privately-operated programs had earned at least an associate (AA) degree. In most states, public-sector Pre-K staff were better-educated than their private-sector counterparts. (By contrast, however, assistant teachers in publicly-operated programs in Chicago and New York were less likely than their counterparts in privately-operated programs to have attained an AA. This may signal an emerging pattern in which some publicly-operated Pre-K programs have one highly-educated teacher and one less-trained assistant teacher, while others expect more training for assistant teachers but less for teachers.)

### Directors

Previous research has shown the relationship between director qualifications and staffing stability in early care and education programs (Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995). Although pre-service education requirements for prekindergarten directors were low in relation to the requirements for the teachers they supervised, a large majority of directors of publicly-operated programs met or substantially exceeded those requirements. Further, in three of the four study sites that employ directors (California, Georgia and New York, but not Chicago), directors in publicly-operated programs had significantly higher levels of formal education than did their private-sector counterparts. Texas, which operates its program almost exclusively through the public schools, does not employ Pre-K directors as such; public school principals serve as site administrators.



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Pre-K directors in New York, who are required to have an AA degree, two years of teaching experience and two years of supervisory experience, had the highest levels of educational attainment among the four states employing directors: 92 to 100 percent in publicly-operated programs, 57 percent in privately-operated nonprofit programs, and 67 percent in privately-operated for-profit programs had attained a master's degree.

In Georgia, where there were no state-specified requirements for prekindergarten directors, but where school districts had the option to set higher pre-service staff education requirements, some 86 percent of directors in publicly-operated programs had at least a BA, while just 64 percent of directors in private nonprofit programs, and 50 percent of those in private for-profit programs, had earned at least a BA. In California, where an AA degree is required of directors, some 76 percent of directors in publicly-operated Pre-K programs, and 28 percent of directors in privately-operated programs, had earned at least a BA.

Table 3. Educational Attainment of Pre-K Directors, by Program Auspice

| STATE | Pre-service Requirements in Publicly-Funded Pre-K Programs | Directors of PUBLICLY-OPERATED Programs | Directors of PRIVATELY-OPERATED Programs |
|---|---|---|---|
| **California** | Requirements depend on scope of duties:<br>**Single site: *Site Supervisors***<br>AA or 60 units, including 24 ECE/CD units, 6 Admin. Units & 2 Adult Supervision units<br>**Multiple sites: *Program Directors***<br>BA, including units noted above | At least a BA: 76%<br>(All directors in our sample oversaw single sites.) | At least a BA: 28%<br>(All directors in our sample oversaw single sites.) |
| **Georgia** | None | At least a BA: 86% | ***Nonprofit***<br>At least a BA: 64%<br>***For-Profit***<br>At least a BA: 50% |
| **Illinois (Chicago)** | None | At least a BA: 81% | At least a BA: 91% |
| **New York (EPK)** | AA in early childhood education, 2 years teaching; 2 years supervision | At least an MA: 92% | NA |
| **New York (UPK)** | Same as EPK | At least an MA: 100% | ***Nonprofit***<br>At least an MA: 57%<br>***For-Profit***<br>At least an MA: 67% |
| **Texas** | NA | NA | NA |



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## Finding 2

***Teaching staff in publicly-operated prekindergarten programs received higher pay and benefits than teaching staff in privately-operated programs.***

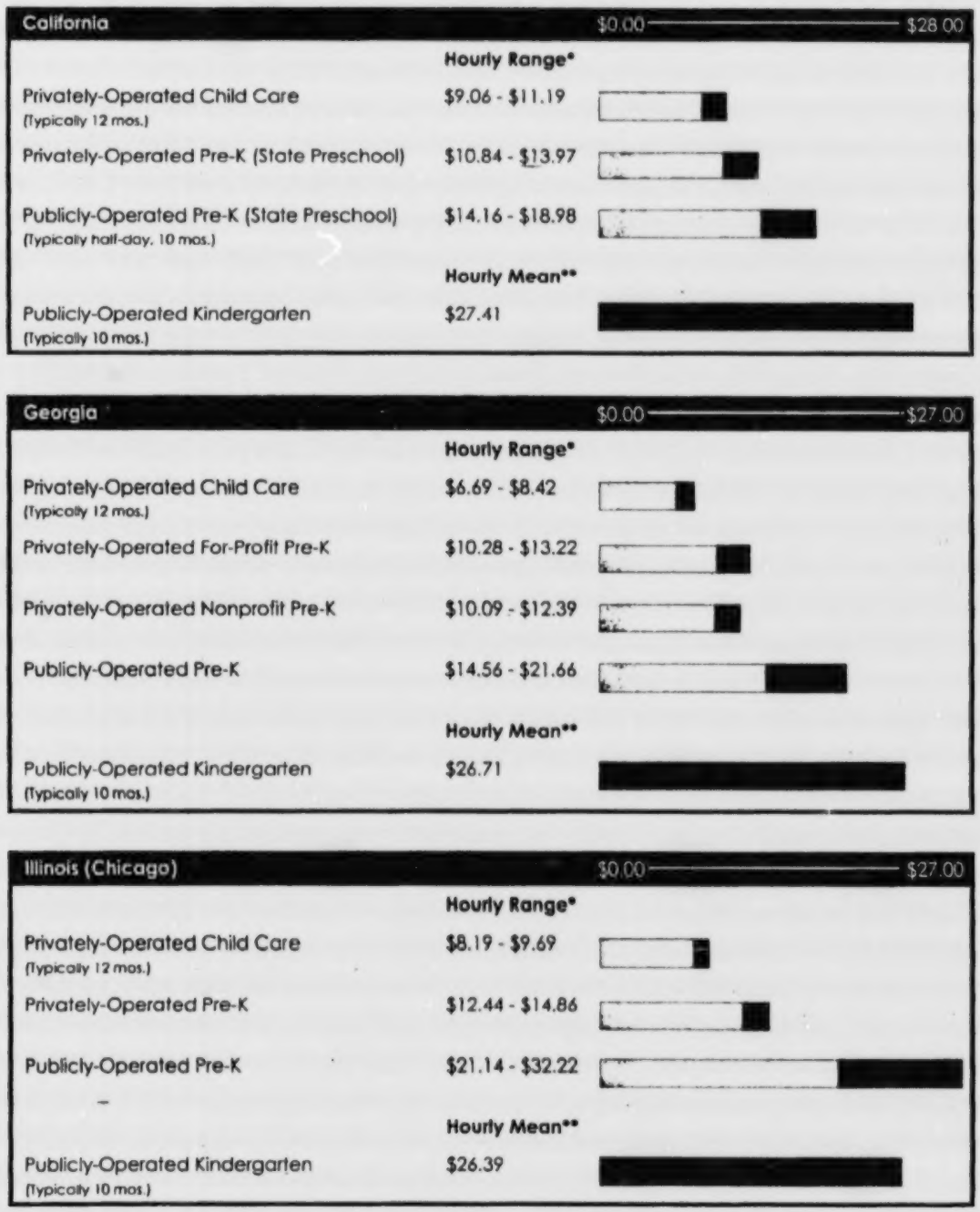
### Hourly Wages: Teachers

In our study sites, prekindergarten teachers employed by school districts received higher pay and benefits than did prekindergarten teachers in privately-operated, community-based prekindergarten programs. In fact, hourly wages for teachers in privately-operated programs were comparable to hourly wages for *assistant* teachers in the publicly-operated programs. Public school Pre-K teacher salary levels approached those of kindergarten teachers in all the states we studied except California, where hourly wages of Pre-K teachers in publicly-operated programs averaged from a low of $14.99 to a high of $18.83, and the average public school kindergarten teacher's hourly wage was $27.41. In part, this lower hourly Pre-K teacher wage in California reflected the lower pre-service educational requirements in that state.

For all five study sites, higher levels of teacher educational attainment were associated with higher wages. But often, the highest wages a program could afford to offer were not sufficient to recruit and retain highly qualified staff. Especially in high-cost-of-living areas such as California's Silicon Valley, many programs could not offer adequate salaries without seeking augmented funding from various sources. As one director remarked, "To meet recruiting/retaining challenges, we are actively working to increase benefits, training and private donations through a private fund development plan. Also, we're involved in advocating for legislation that will boost reimbursement from the state."

In Figure 1, hourly wages for Pre-K teachers are compared with those for teachers in privately-operated child care programs and kindergarten teachers in public schools, both of which groups often have similar responsibilities to Pre-K teaching, and, in some cases, similar educational qualifications.

## Figure 1: Hourly Wages of Pre-K Teachers, By Auspice



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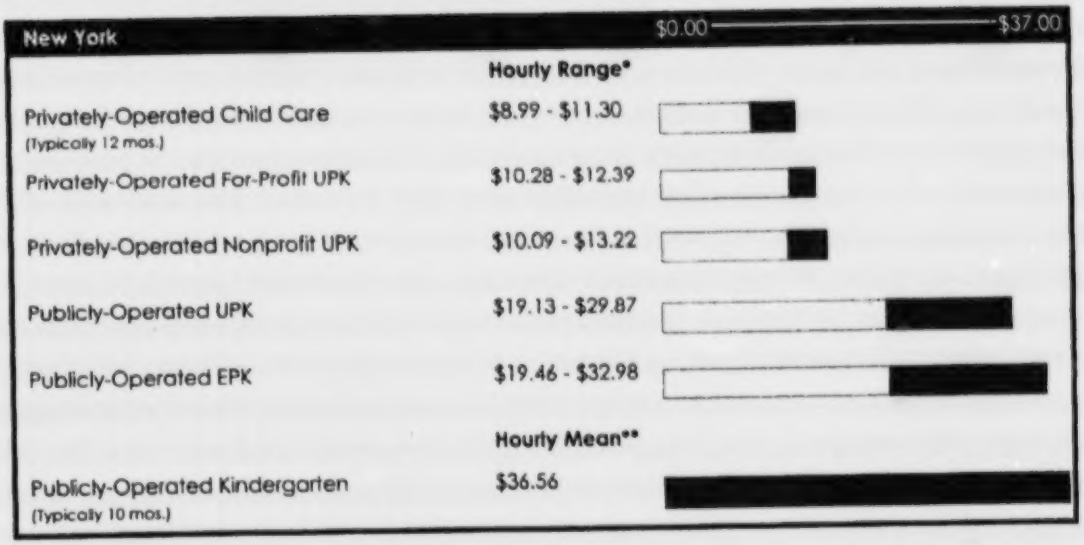


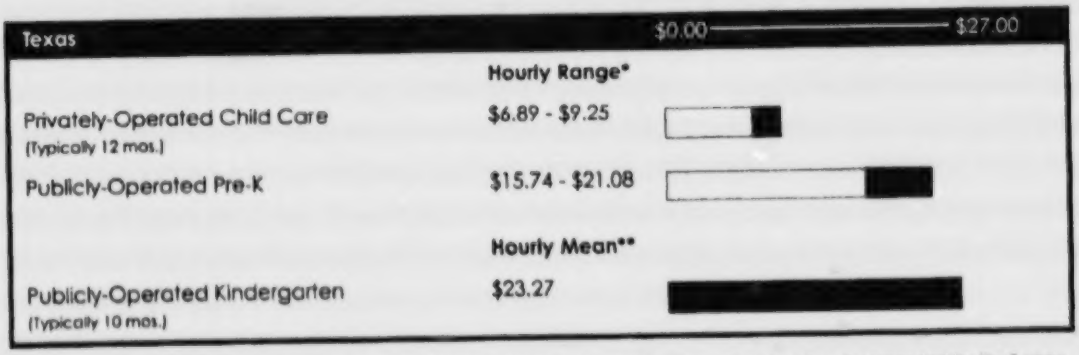


* From the mean hourly wages for "child care workers" to the mean hourly wages for "preschool teachers," as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (U.S. Department of Labor, 2000).

** Calculated by dividing mean annual salary by 1,600 hours (40 weeks at 40 hours per week).

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**Hourly Wages:**
**Assistant Teachers and Directors**

There was no consistent relationship between educational attainment and compensation for assistant teachers or for directors.

Figure 2: Hourly Wages of Pre-K Assistant Teachers, By Auspice

| State | Hourly Range* | $0.00 —— $16.00 |
|---|---|---|
| **California** | | |
| Privately-Operated Pre-K | $9.33 - $12.28 | |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit Pre-K | $13.97 - $15.14 | |
| **Georgia** | | |
| Privately-Operated For-Profit Pre-K (Typically 12 mos.) | $7.56 - $8.56 | |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit Pre-K (Typically 12 mos.) | $7.00 - $8.08 | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K (Typically 10 mos.) | $7.69 - $10.31 | |
| **Illinois (Chicago)** | | |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit Pre-K | $7.46 - $9.86 | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | $9.80 - $12.51 | |
| **New York** | | |
| Privately-Operated For-Profit UPK | $7.31 - $8.43 | |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit UPK | $8.31 - $10.44 | |
| Publicly-Operated UPK | $8.83 - $9.96 | |
| EPK | $8.52 - $11.20 | |
| **Texas** | | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | $8.16 - $9.40 | |

* Figures indicate ranges from mean starting (or lowest) to mean highest hourly wage.

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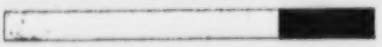
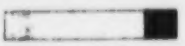
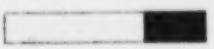
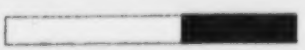
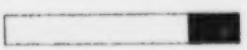
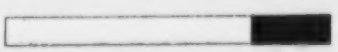
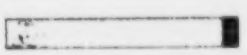
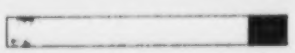
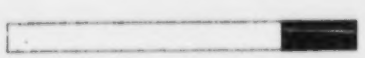
Figure 3: Hourly Wages of Pre-K Directors, By Auspice

| State | Hourly Range* | $0.00 —— $34.00 |
|---|---|---|
| **California** | | |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit Pre-K | $8.59 - $19.55 | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | $22.45 - $30.21 |  |
| **Georgia** | | |
| Privately-Operated For-Profit Pre-K (Typically 12 mos.) | $11.45 - $14.18 |  |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit Pre-K (Typically 12 mos.) | $11.50 - $16.53 |  |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K (Typically 10 mos.) | $14.48 - $23.87 |  |
| **Illinois (Chicago)** | | |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit Pre-K | $15.08 - $19.26 |  |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | $20.16 - $26.58 |  |
| **New York** | | |
| Privately-Operated For-Profit UPK | $17.75 - $19.00 |  |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit UPK | $19.71 - $22.97 |  |
| Publicly-Operated UPK | $22.41 - $28.54 |  |
| EPK | $29.70 - $33.32 | |
| **Texas** | | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | NA | NA |

* Figures indicate ranges from mean starting (or lowest) to mean highest hourly wage.



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**Benefits**

The proportion of publicly-operated prekindergarten programs that offered teachers fully-paid health care coverage as a job benefit ranged from a low of 29 percent in Georgia to a high of 91 percent in California. Among privately-operated programs, the percentage offering fully-paid health care coverage ranged from 0 percent in New York's for-profit UPK programs, to 60 percent in California.

Publicly-operated prekindergarten programs were generally much more likely to offer a contribution to teacher retirement plans and pensions than were privately-operated programs. In all states surveyed, 86 to 98 percent of publicly-operated programs offered an employer contribution to a retirement plan or pension. Among privately-operated programs, the range in percentage of programs offering to contribute to a retirement plan or pension was much wider, from a low of 11 percent among for-profit UPK programs in New York, to 71 percent among privately-operated programs in Chicago and nonprofit UPK programs in New York.

Table 4: Teacher Benefits, By Auspice

| | Programs Offering Fully-Paid Health Care Coverage* | Programs Offering an Employer Contribution to a Teacher Retirement Plan or Pension |
|---|---|---|
| **CALIFORNIA** | | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | **91%** | **96%** |
| Privately-Operated Pre-K | **60%** | **50%** |
| **GEORGIA** | | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | **29%** | **86%** |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit Pre-K | **32%** | **45%** |
| Privately-Operated For-Profit Pre-K | **11%** | **38%** |
| **ILLINOIS** | | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | **44%** | **98%** |
| Privately-Operated Pre-K | **41%** | **71%** |
| **NEW YORK** | **68%** | **91%** |
| EPK | **50%** | **90%** |
| Publicly-Operated UPK | | |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit UPK | **11%** | **71%** |
| Privately-Operated For-Profit UPK | **0%** | **11%** |
| **TEXAS** | | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | **49%** | **92%** |

* "Fully-paid" is defined here as covering the health care insurance costs of the employed teacher. No information about teachers' use of such benefits was collected. Directors were asked about health benefits offered to *full-time* teachers.



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### Unionization

In publicly-operated prekindergarten programs in California, Chicago and New York, some 96 to 98 percent of teachers were represented by a collective bargaining unit; although Texas operates its Pre-K program almost exclusively through the public schools, however, none of its Pre-K teachers were unionized. In privately-operated prekindergarten programs, the rate of union representation of teachers ranged from two percent in Georgia and five percent in Chicago to 33 percent in California. Teachers whose programs were represented by a collective bargaining unit tended to have higher wages.

Table 5: Teacher Unionization, By Auspice

| | Unionized Programs* |
|---|---|
| **CALIFORNIA** | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | 96% |
| Privately-Operated Pre-K | 33% |
| **GEORGIA** | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | 0% |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit Pre-K | 2% |
| Privately-Operated For-Profit Pre-K | 0% |
| **ILLINOIS (Chicago)** | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | 98% |
| Privately-Operated Pre-K | 5% |
| **NEW YORK** | |
| EPK | 97% |
| Publicly-Operated UPK | 70% |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit UPK | 11% |
| Privately-Operated For-Profit UPK | 10% |
| **TEXAS** | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | 0% |

* Refers to percentage of programs sampled whose teachers and/or assistants were covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

## Finding 3

***There was greater teaching staff stability in publicly-operated prekindergarten programs than in privately-operated programs.***

The previously established relationship between higher wages and greater staffing stability among early care and education staff (Whitebook, et al., 2001; Whitebook & Bellm, 1999; Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995; Whitebook, et al., 1990) was reconfirmed by our study findings, with better-compensated staff in publicly-operated programs generally experiencing substantially greater job stability than their counterparts in the private sector. Staffing stability among public school prekindergarten teachers in California, Georgia and New York was comparable to the stability of the national K-12 teacher workforce, which experiences an average annual turnover rate of about six percent. In Texas and Chicago, annual turnover rates among public school prekindergarten teachers were higher — 20 percent and 24 percent, respectively — but still somewhat lower than those for staff in privately-operated, community-based programs in the study, and lower than the 30% national annual turnover rate among all early childhood educators.

In all states except Texas, rates of teacher turnover were much higher when wages fell below the state median starting wage. In Georgia, for example, where the median hourly Pre-K starting wage was $10.12, programs that paid above-median wages had a turnover rate of 29 percent, while those paying below-median wages experienced 42-percent turnover. A New York director described the dramatic difference in staffing stability in her area, based on wages: "Our EPK program, all in school district classrooms, has no problems recruiting and retaining staff. Our UPK program, which contracts out to Head Start, has low wages and problems in these areas. Although schools help out, the low wages largely contribute to 85-percent turnover rates for UPK sites."

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Figure 4: Teacher and Assistant Teacher Turnover, by Auspice

| State | Turnover | 0% — 100% |
|---|---|---|
| **California** | | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | | |
| Teachers: | 4% | |
| Assistant Teachers: | 18% | |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit & For-Profit Pre-K | | |
| Teachers: | 28% | |
| Assistant Teachers: | 63% | |
| **Georgia** | | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | | |
| Teachers: | 8% | |
| Assistant Teachers: | 14% | |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit Pre-K | | |
| Teachers: | 25% | |
| Assistant Teachers: | 40% | |
| Privately-Operated For-Profit Pre-K | | |
| Teachers: | 39% | |
| Assistant Teachers: | 36% | |
| **Illinois (Chicago)** | | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | | |
| Teachers: | 20% | |
| Assistant Teachers: | 14% | |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit & For-Profit Pre-K | | |
| Teachers: | 52% | |
| Assistant Teachers: | 36% | |
| **New York** | | |
| Publicly-Operated EPK | | |
| Teachers: | 10% | |
| Assistant Teachers: | 18% | |
| Publicly-Operated UPK | | |
| Teachers: | 7% | |
| Assistant Teachers: | 13% | |
| Privately-Operated Nonprofit UPK | | |
| Teachers: | 19% | |
| Assistant Teachers: | 6% | |
| Privately-Operated For-Profit UPK | | |
| Teachers: | 13% | |
| Assistant Teachers: | 46% | |
| **Texas** | | |
| Publicly-Operated Pre-K | | |
| Teachers: | 24% | |
| Assistant Teachers: | 6% | |



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## Finding 4

***Publicly-operated and privately-operated programs appeared to be evolving into separate segments of a two-tier prekindergarten system.***

To the extent that states establish a Pre-K system using multiple program auspices, the above-noted differences between publicly- and privately-operated programs can have the effect over time of creating a two-tier prekindergarten system. We found that the privately-operated, community-based programs tended to serve as a training ground or apprenticeship opportunity for new teachers who, once they had acquired more skills and experience, and/or perhaps a required credential, moved to better-compensated jobs in publicly-operated programs. (Alone among the five study sites in our sample, Texas operates its prekindergarten program almost exclusively through the public schools.)

In states with both publicly and privately-operated prekindergarten programs, the wage differential between the two program types created a flow of more skilled, experienced teachers from privately-operated to publicly-operated programs. Class size reduction in kindergarten and primary grades in many states has further increased the opportunities for the best educated, most experienced teachers in the early childhood workforce to move into public elementary education.

As the director of a privately-operated Pre-K program in Georgia commented, "There is high turnover in the private sector. As soon as teaching staff can obtain the qualifications, they are off to the public schools. We can always (recruit) teaching staff, but we cannot keep them." Another Georgia director noted: "There is fierce competition [for teaching staff]. Schools come and recruit from our center...The state minimum salaries are way too low. I pay more because I couldn't ask anyone to work for that. You go into a hole if you run a quality program."

Similarly, the director of a privately-operated Universal Prekindergarten program in New York observed, "It's always a problem keeping up with the Board of Education's salaries and benefits. Teachers without licensing come here to get training, and once they have a license, they dump us for the school district."

Well-intended state policy to upgrade the prekindergarten teaching profession may inadvertently accelerate the development of a two-tier system of prekindergarten programs. For example, when states raise prekindergarten teacher qualification standards for privately-operated, community-based child care programs, but do not increase program funding to improve teacher wages, they increase the probability that teachers will leave community-based, privately-operated programs for better-paying jobs in school districts.

In all five states in our sample, directors of privately-run prekindergarten programs cited inadequate state funding as the primary cause of low teacher salaries and high turnover in their programs. The result was that the teaching skill level and stability of the publicly-operated programs increased, but at the expense of teachers and children in the privately-operated programs.

## Finding 5

***Prekindergarten programs, both publicly- and privately-operated, have had mixed success in integrating their teaching staff into existing service delivery systems.***

For teachers in publicly- and privately-operated prekindergarten programs alike, there were certain challenges, and sometimes opportunities, related to becoming integrated into the overall teaching staff structure of a school, child care center, community agency, business or other organization. Whether or not such integration occurred had significant implications for how effectively teachers could do their jobs, and what opportunities they had for professional development and career advancement.

Within the administrative structure of public schools, Pre-K directors and teachers faced the

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challenge of gaining recognition and acceptance in a school system. It often depended on a high degree of initiative from school principals to ensure that prekindergarten teachers were viewed as professional equals and partners by their K-12 colleagues – working consciously to counteract the relatively low social value generally attached to caring for young children. Lack of support or understanding from a school principal, however, could be a major problem. One symptom of this was the practice of "raiding" the best teachers from a Pre-K program and placing them elsewhere in the upper grades, as an Experimental Prekindergarten program director in New York observed:

*"Principals will move teachers around from Pre-K to other grades. Principals do not value Pre-K like K-6, so they'll take a great Pre-K teacher out of the Pre-K classroom and replace them with someone less qualified. Our high certification and educational requirements make it more difficult to recruit qualified teaching staff when principals don't support Pre-K."*

Within privately-operated early childhood education programs, on the other hand, prekindergarten teachers could sometimes be viewed as operating in a more privileged and autonomous work environment. Because of separate funding streams and regulations, Pre-K teachers frequently had higher wages, better working conditions, and more teaching resources than did their colleagues who worked in other classrooms in the center or agency. The challenge in this case was to promote collegiality and continuity of care for children in the face of potential competition and resentments between worse- and better-compensated staff with similar job responsibilities and qualifications. When states provided more generous funding to privately-operated prekindergarten programs, there were sometimes sufficient funds to improve the work environment of all center staff, which offset some of this resentment.

Our findings on Pre-K program integration into service delivery systems are largely centered in Georgia and Chicago, where researchers explicitly raised this question in focus groups and interviews as part of our extended, qualitative investigation of those two study sites.

**Georgia**

In Georgia's privately-operated programs, the extent to which Pre-K was integrated into the overall organization or agency varied, depending on the site. The higher earnings of Pre-K teachers were a potential set-up for tension. One Pre-K teacher who attended a focus group for this study cited the fact that she earned three times the wages of non-Pre-K child care teachers at her center. At the same time, some interviewees felt that other teachers were not resentful of the Pre-K teachers, knowing that Pre-K teachers had more education. The tension was potentially more present between non-Pre-K teachers and Pre-K assistant teachers, if those teachers had comparable or even higher educational backgrounds but earned lower wages. Some programs also experienced the disparity that Pre-K teachers received more paid planning time, during which they were not expected to share in direct caregiving duties for children at the site, than did non-Pre-K teachers.

Moreover, Pre-K programs received state funding for supplies, which became a point of tension in some settings. The skill of the director in sharing such supplies equitably seemed to be the determining factor in whether or not this became a significant issue. More tension existed in a center where the Pre-K teacher assumed that the supplies were for her classroom alone, and demanded that they be used for this purpose. In a focus group, one director of a private child care center observed:

*"When I first started the program, I heard that it could be divisive, so I did things to make sure that it didn't happen. I instituted all-staff meetings to build a sense that we are all working together. Pre-K does get more planning time, so I tried to be sure to set that up (so that) if they are there during their planning time and there are crying children and they are sipping coffee and not dealing with it, that just doesn't look right. We're all on the same team. I think it has a lot to do with how you*



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*set it up.... (Other teachers) know they don't make as much money as the certified teachers, but as far as the way the classes look, it is comparable."*

Representatives of the state Office of School Readiness (OSR), which oversees Georgia's Pre-K effort, noted that they have aimed to provide training for all teaching staff in centers housing privately-operated Pre-K programs, in an attempt to "raise the bar" of educational attainment and to support the overall quality of the centers. They have collaborated with the state Department of Human Resources, which administers federal block grant funds to subsidized child care, to provide joint training, and with Head Start to support infant/toddler training.

All private center directors in the focus group agreed that having a Pre-K program in their centers affected the rest of the program positively. One observed that "Having certified teachers in a day care center definitely raises the bar." All noted that they send all of their teaching staff to OSR training.

In Georgia's publicly-operated (public school-based) Pre-K sites, an overall pressing issue was the shortage of classroom space, restricting the ability of programs to expand to scale and serve all eligible children; this created competition within many schools concerning which classroom spaces were available for which purposes.

Teachers in publicly-operated Pre-K programs varied in the extent to which they felt a part of their schools. Some were frustrated that teachers of upper grades did not understand the developmental needs and behaviors of four-year-olds, and either treated them as babies or had excessively high expectations of them. When teachers were invited or were able to take on other, non-prekindergarten-classroom roles within the school, and/or acted in some way as a part of the greater school community, tensions or disconnections between them and the rest of the school tended to dissipate.

Pre-K teachers in the focus group also noted the positive effect of their educational requirements being the same as those for teachers in the upper grades. In order to teach in the public schools, teachers were generally required to be certified, but could be hired with provisional certification. Different counties in Georgia varied in how long the provisional period could last, and in some counties, it appeared that if a certified teacher was not available, a non-certified teacher could be hired. All teachers agreed that Pre-K teachers *should* be certified and degreed, which would put them on par with their colleagues in upper grades and affect the level of respect they received from coworkers.

The presence of a supportive principal was also critical to teachers' sense of being supported within the school, but this support did not necessarily translate to Pre-K teachers feeling connected with teachers in the upper grades. The Georgia school principal interviewed for this study also felt that the Pre-K curriculum did not flow well into the kindergarten curriculum, making it harder for Pre-K and kindergarten teachers to coordinate their efforts.

**Chicago**

Overall, the state-funded Pre-K program in Chicago was highly regarded and valued. It was viewed as beneficial to children, and as a good professional environment for teaching staff, both in schools and in subcontracted private agencies. As one interviewee said, "Chicago has the best model." The advent of universal preschool in Illinois was also viewed mainly as a positive development. Most saw it as an opportunity to obtain more public resources to improve early childhood programs.

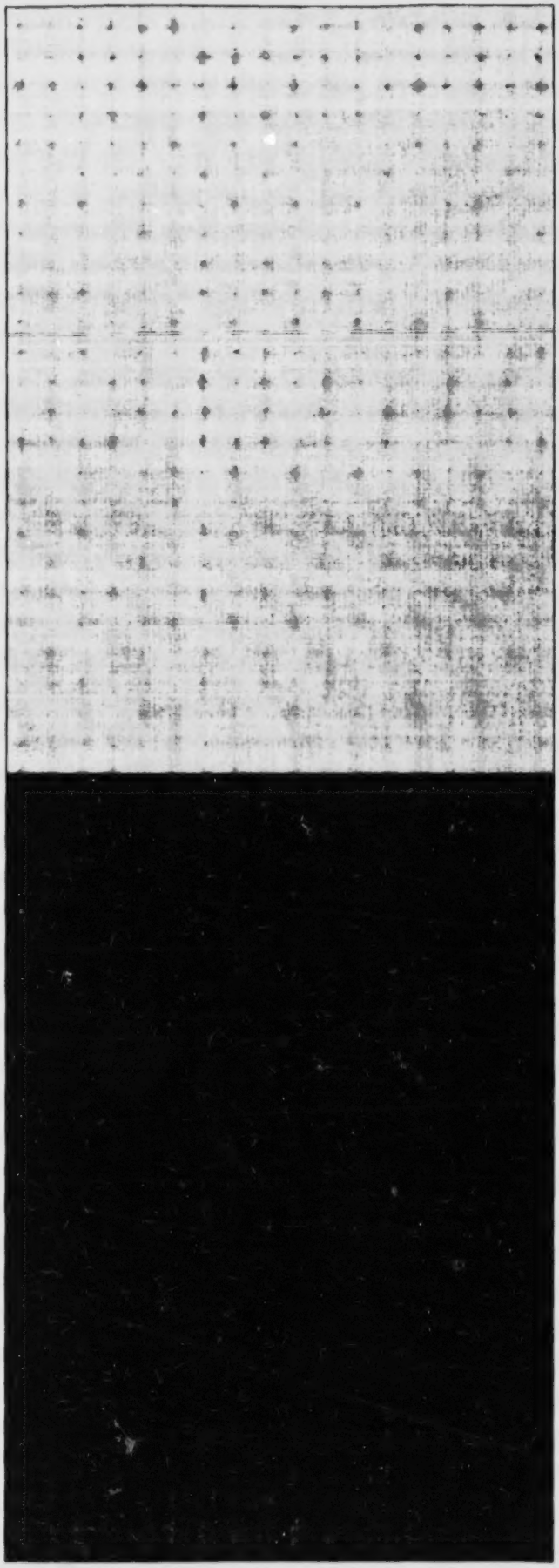
Privately-operated, community-based Pre-K programs appeared to be well integrated into the community agencies. As a Chicago Public Schools administrator said, "Our goal with subcontracting is integration of Pre-K into child care. Integration is encouraged, supported, expected." The subcontracting agencies appeared to blend Pre-K with their other funding resources to provide children

with a full day of quality early care and education. Administrators appeared to use Pre-K funding to address the quality of work life for all child care staff, sharing state-funded Pre-K resources among all classrooms and improving benefits for all staff. Rather than competition or divisiveness, even in programs where state-funded Pre-K staff were paid better than other child care staff, there was a sense of mutual benefit. In some instances, community-based administrators allocated their resources to create one salary scale for all lead teachers so that teachers with equivalent qualifications to Pre-K teachers were paid the same salary, regardless of which age group of children they worked with.

On the other hand, publicly-operated, school-based Pre-K programs seemed not to be well integrated into the elementary schools. One factor was isolation: the Pre-K classrooms were often housed in separate buildings, and typically there was only one Pre-K classroom in a school. Another was the reportedly poor image that other teachers had of Pre-K teachers. The differences in schedule, reporting requirements and teacher-controlled resources between Pre-K and the rest of the school (K-primary) also reinforced this separateness.

## Endnotes

[1] One small exception to this rule is New York's Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) program, in which UPK teachers in publicly-run programs must have a bachelor's degree and an early childhood education credential, whereas teachers in privately-run UPKs, at the time of our study, needed only a bachelor's degree. As of the 2002-03 school year, however, requirements are the same for all UPK teachers.



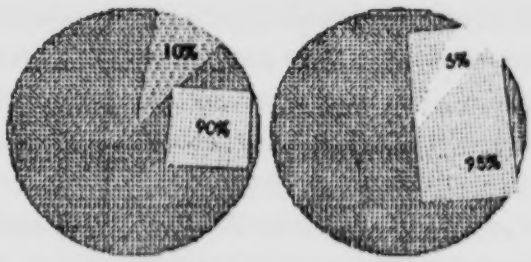
# California State Preschool Program

California developed its State- Preschool program in 1963 to provide part-day education for three- to five-year-old children of low-income families.[1] While at least 75 percent of State Preschools are operated by and located in public school districts, according to the California Department of Education, which administers the program community-based nonprofit agencies, public universities and community colleges can also receive state funds to offer preschool services to eligible children.[2]

Eighty-five percent of the programs in this survey sample were operated by school districts, four percent by public universities and colleges, and 11 percent by community-based nonprofit agencies. The programs surveyed were located in Kern, San Diego, Santa Clara and Shasta Counties.

Public university and college programs bear a closer resemblance to school district programs than to community-based organizations because they are also publicly owned and operated.[3] Since there were relatively few university and college programs in the sample, and because of their structural similarities with school district programs, we have combined them with school district programs in our analyses. The final sample reflects the predominance of publicly-operated programs in these four counties.

**Figure 1: Sample of California State Preschools**




Programs (51 total) | Sites (194 total)

Publicly Operated*

Privately Operated (Community-Based Nonprofit)

* Primarily composed of school district programs. Includes a small number of preschools (N=2) under the auspices of a public university or community college.

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## Program Characteristics

Families with preschool children (ages three to five) are eligible for California State Preschool programs if their incomes fall below 62 to 72 percent of the state median income. State General Funds are the primary funding source for State Preschool programs, wherever they are housed; although privately-operated community agency programs in our sample were more likely than school districts to augment their budgets with donations, these comprised only a small percentage of their total preschool budgets. In addition to serving children ages three and four in classes funded by State Preschool dollars, community agencies relied on other public funds to serve other groups of children in their programs. Community agencies reported that 98 percent of their overall budgets came from a variety of public sources.

California State Preschool programs typically offered two half-day sessions for children ages three to five, five days a week, and were closed during the summer months; programs were generally limited to 175 days of operation. Privately-operated programs were more likely than publicly-operated programs to operate year-round, using other funding sources, but this was still uncommon. (See Table 1.) Most teachers worked an average of 34 hours per week, but assistant teachers were more likely to be employed part-time, for an average of 24 hours per week. Directors worked an average of 41 hours per week, for an 11-month year.

Table 1: Characteristics of Surveyed Programs

| | |
|---|---|
| **Auspice** | Most preschool programs were operated under the auspices of public school districts (85 percent). The remainder were operated under the auspices of community-based nonprofits and public colleges and universities. |
| **Ages of Children Served** | 3-5 years old |
| **Daily Schedule** | Two half-day sessions per day serving two distinct groups of children |
| **Annual Schedule** | 9-10 month school district calendar; privately-operated programs were more likely to offer full-year services.[5] |
| **Sources of Funding** | More than 90 percent of funding was from public sources for publicly-operated and privately-operated preschool programs. |
| **Number of Teaching and Administrative Staff Employed Per Program**** | 4 Teachers; 6 Assistant Teachers; 1 On-site Director |

** Others not involved in direct caregiving for preschool children, such as clerical or administrative staff, were not included here. Teaching staff who cared for infants, toddlers or school-age children in programs that house State Preschool programs were also not included.



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## Demographic Characteristics of Teaching Staff

California State Preschool teaching staff, like other members of the U.S. child care workforce, were predominantly female. Most teachers were between the ages of 30 and 49, whereas assistant teachers were somewhat younger, with most falling between 20 and 39 years of age. Teachers and assistant teachers were ethnically diverse, reflecting broader demographic trends in California; the majority of staff were women of color.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Teaching Staff

| | Teachers | Assistant Teachers |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | 98% female | 95% female |
| **Age** | 61% between 30 and 49 years | 56% between 20 and 39 years |
| **Ethnicity** | 47% Latino<br>42% Caucasian<br>7% African American<br>3% Asian American<br>1% Other | 55% Latino<br>34% Caucasian<br>5% African American<br>3% Asian American<br>3% Other |

## Educational Background of Prekindergarten Staff

The State of California has two separate sets of regulations governing educational requirements for teaching and administrative staff in center-based programs serving preschool-age children. Requirements are higher for staff of State Preschools and subsidized child care centers than for staff of other licensed, non-subsidized centers. To be a fully qualified teacher in a State Preschool or subsidized child care program, an applicant must have completed 24 college-level units (equivalent to credits) in Early Childhood Education, and 16 units of General Education, prior to employment. Teachers in other licensed, non-subsidized child care centers are required to complete only 12 units. Adopted in 1997, these State Preschool educational requirements represent a change in standards for teachers first instituted in 1979.[6] To qualify for State Preschool funds, community-based programs must meet the same educational requirements for teaching and administrative staff as do publicly-operated programs. The State recommends but does not require that assistant teachers complete six college-level units of Early Childhood Education.[7] (See Table 3.)

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| Table 3: Minimum Educational Requirements for California State Preschool Staff | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Assistant Teachers** | **Teachers*** | **On-site Directors (Called Site Supervisors)** | **Program Directors** |
| No pre-service requirements; 6 units recommended | 24 units of Early Childhood Education/Child Development (ECE/CD), 16 General Education units, and 4 Supervision and Specialization units | AA Degree (or 60 units) with 24 ECE/CD units, 6 Administration units, and 2 Adult Supervision units | BA Degree with 24 ECE/CD Units, 6 Administration Units, and Adult Supervision units |

Source: State of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

* Associate teachers, who must complete 12 units of ECE/CD, are permitted to serve as teachers in State Preschool programs on an emergency basis.

More than one-half (56 percent) of State Preschool teachers in our sample had completed an associate degree in Early Childhood Education as their highest level of education. One-quarter of teachers (26 percent) had completed a bachelor's degree or above. One third (36 percent) of assistant teachers had not completed any Early Childhood Education courses at the college level. (See Figure 5.)

More than one-half (59 percent) of on-site directors had completed a bachelor's degree or higher. Depending on program structure, particularly when multiple sites were involved, directors were required to meet the qualifications of a Program Director. Directors employed by publicly-operated programs were more likely to have completed a bachelor's degree or higher than their counterparts in privately-operated community agency programs.



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| Table 4. Educational Attainments of State Preschool Staff in Early Childhood Education | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Assistant Teachers** | **Teachers** | **Directors** |
| **Master's degree and above** | 0% | 3% | 27% |
| **Bachelor's degree (BA) plus credential*** | 0% | 18% | 26% |
| **BA in Early Childhood Education (ECE)** | 0% | 3% | 3% |
| **BA (not in ECE)** | 1% | 2% | 3% |
| **Associate degree (AA) in ECE** | 19% | 56% | 26% |
| **Some College-Level Work in ECE, less than AA** | 46% | 18% | 15% |
| **No College-Level ECE** | 34% | 0% | 0% |

* Credential certifies that the staff member has completed post-baccalaureate work to qualify to teach in an elementary school. The credential may reflect a concentration in elementary or early childhood education or a single subject in home economics.

| Table 5. Educational Characteristics of Staff, by Auspice | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Assistant Teachers with an AA and above** | **Teachers with a BA and above** | **Directors with a BA and above[8]** |
| **Publicly-Operated** | 18% | 30% | 76% |
| **Privately-Operated (Community-Based Nonprofit)** | 0% | 8% | 29% |
| **Total** | 16% | 28% | 69% |

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## Compensation

State Preschool teaching staff, particularly assistant teachers, earned modest hourly and annual salaries as compensation for their work with young children. On average, teachers earned a starting hourly wage of $13.82, and $18.47 as the highest hourly wage level. For teachers who were employed more than 20 hours per week, these hourly wages translated into annual earnings ranging from $23,977 to $30,127.[9] Assistant teachers who were employed full-time earned average annual salaries ranging from $15,269 to $19,431; most, however, were employed part-time, and part-time assistant teachers' annual salaries ranged from $6,618 to $8,272. Directors' average annual salaries ranged from $40,344 to $51,133.

Differences in the level of average highest wages offered to directors by publicly-operated programs ($30.21) and privately-operated, community-based programs ($19.55) were notable, but were not statistically significant, due to the small sample of privately-operated programs.

As shown in Table 7, educational attainment resulted in higher salaries only for teachers who had achieved the highest level of education; it did not appear to produce such results at the associate degree (AA) level and below.[10] A closer look at programs employing teachers with some college work or AA degrees reveals a regional effect. In Kern, San Diego and Shasta Counties, teachers with AA degrees earned higher salaries, on average, than those who had completed some college courses, while in Santa Clara County, this trend was reversed. Since the salaries offered by Santa Clara County State Preschools were higher, on average, than those offered to State Preschool teachers in other counties,[11] the Santa Clara County salaries had a strong effect on the mean wages for teachers at the levels of "some college units" or "AA".[12]

Table 6: Mean Starting and Highest Wages, by Auspice

| | Teachers | Assistant Teachers | Directors |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Publicly-Operated** | | | |
| Low | $14.16 | $9.33 | $22.45 |
| High | $18.98 | $12.29 | $30.21 |
| **Privately-Operated** | | | |
| Low | $10.84 | $8.60 | $15.14 |
| High | $13.97 | $11.21 | $19.55 |
| **Total** | | | |
| Low | $13.82 | $9.27 | $21.15 |
| High | $18.47 | $12.20 | $28.54 |

Table 7: Mean Starting and Highest Wages of Teachers, by Education

| | Starting or Lowest Hourly Wage | Highest Hourly Wage |
|---|---|---|
| MA and above | $18.40 | $25.05 |
| BA plus credential | $16.75 | $20.39 |
| BA | $14.43 | $20.07 |
| AA in ECE | $13.70 | $16.87 |
| Some college units in ECE, less than AA | $14.09 | $17.16 |



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| Table 8: Mean Starting and Highest Wages of Directors, by Education | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Starting or Lowest Hourly Wage** | **Highest Hourly Wage** |
| **MA and above** | $28.28 | $32.42 |
| **BA plus credential** | $20.67 | $27.62 |
| **BA** | $22.54 | $25.76 |
| **AA in ECE** | $15.59 | $17.26 |
| **Some college units in ECE, less than AA** | $13.86 | $17.44 |

| Table 9: Benefits | |
|---|---|
| **Health Benefits** | Ninety-six percent offered health insurance to teachers, and about two-thirds (67%) to assistant teachers. |
| **Level of Health Coverage** | Ninety-one percent of publicly-operated programs, and 60 percent of privately-operated programs, offered teachers fully-paid health coverage.[13] |
| **Pension Plan** | Ninety-six percent of publicly-operated programs, and 50% of privately-operated programs, regularly contributed to a pension plan for teachers.[14] |

## Employee Benefit Plans

Although privately-operated programs were as likely as publicly-operated programs to offer some kind of health benefits to teachers, public programs' health benefits were much more likely to be fully paid by the employer. Publicly-operated programs were also more likely to make employer contributions to pension plans. (See Table 9.)

## Unionization

Publicly-operated program teaching staff were much more likely to be members of unions that represented them in collective bargaining agreements. Ninety-six percent of publicly-operated programs, and 33% of privately-operated programs, had unions representing teachers and/or assistant teachers.[15]

## Turnover

Turnover among State Preschool teaching staff in this sample was substantially lower (at 5% for teachers, and 21% for assistant teachers) than the 30-percent rate identified in most child care programs in California and nationally.[16] Turnover among teachers more closely resembled the rate found among K-12 teachers. Privately-operated, community-based programs, however, confronted substantially higher turnover among teachers (29 percent) and assistant teachers (63 percent) than



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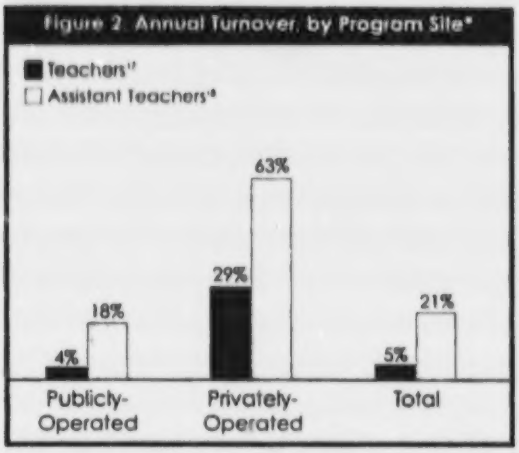


* Turnover results describe the annual rate of turnover reported by site.

did publicly-operated programs; as a result, the overall staffing stability of California State Preschool programs can be attributed largely to very low rates of turnover in the publicly-operated programs. (See Figure 2.)

**Figure 3: Annual Teacher Turnover, by Wage***

| Teacher | Turnover | 0% — 100% |
|---|---|---|
| Earning below median starting wage of $13.07 | 17% | |
| Earning above median starting wage of $13.07 | 3% | |
| Earning below median high wage of $17.49 | 14% | |
| Earning above median high wage of $17.49 | 4% | |

* Results describe annual turnover reported at the program level.

**Figure 4: Annual Assistant Teacher Turnover, by Wage***

| Assistant Teacher | Turnover | 0% — 100% |
|---|---|---|
| Earning below median starting wage of $9.50 | 31% | |
| Earning above median starting wage of $9.50 | 15% | |
| Earning below median high wage of $12.01 | 29% | |
| Earning above median high wage of $12.01 | 17% | |

* Results describe annual turnover reported at the program level.



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Programs in this sample that offered teachers starting hourly wages above the median ($13.07) had one-fifth the level of turnover of programs offering wages below the median. Assistant teacher turnover was about twice as high in programs paying less than the median starting wage of $9.50 per hour. The trend for better-paying programs to have lower turnover was also evident among teachers and assistant teachers earning the highest-end salaries. (See Figures 3 and 4.) Assistant teacher turnover was significantly higher in State Preschool programs paying lower starting and lower upper-level wages.[19]

Because of relatively low turnover among teachers in all programs, this study does not provide definitive answers about what aspects of publicly-operated program employment influenced teacher stability. The health and pension benefit package in the predominantly school district-based programs in this sample, which was substantial when compared with that offered by most privately-operated child care programs, may have augmented school district salaries and proved a strong incentive for teachers to remain in these positions. Moreover, because publicly-operated programs demonstrated a trend toward paying higher salaries than publicly-operated programs, staff employed by these programs may not have had opportunities to move into other better-paying jobs in their communities, and thus remained in publicly-operated programs for many years.

As one school district director reported when asked about challenges in recruiting and retaining staff, "We don't have any problems, because we're the only game in town. Head Start closed. [We] use competitive wages." In communities without Head Start programs, which typically pay higher wages than community-based child care programs, school district programs probably offered the best-paying early childhood education jobs with the best benefits.

## Directors' Views on Recruiting and Retaining Staff

Surprisingly few differences were found among directors of publicly-operated and privately-operated programs in how they perceived the problems of recruiting and retaining staff. Nearly one-half of both groups (40% of school district program directors and 50% of privately-operated program directors) identified low wages as a major impediment. As is often the case in programs serving young children, those paying better wages may have had lower rates of turnover than programs paying less, but they still faced stiff competition from K-12 schools and other industries because of the relatively low wages that pervade the early care and education field.

Table 10: Barriers to Recruiting and Retaining Staff: Responses from All Directors

| | |
|---|---|
| **Low wages** | 41% |
| **Inadequate supply of applicants who meet educational qualifications** | 31% |
| **Inadequate benefits** | 22% |
| **Competition from kindergarten and elementary school employers** | 16% |

Several directors of publicly-operated programs spoke of the challenges of competing with other industries to attract and retain qualified staff, particularly because of the relatively high cost of living in many regions of California:

*The hardest challenge is salary, based on comparable salaries in this geographical area. There is good money in private industry, and the high cost of living makes these teaching positions low-income.*

*In Silicon Valley, low salaries mean the necessity for another income source, or the area becomes too costly to live in. We offer staff development and spend an inordinate amount of money on advertising.*

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*Our salaries and benefits are good, but could be better given the high cost of living in our region.*

One director employed by a rural school district identified the lack of additional funding beyond State Preschool funds as a problem in offering adequate salaries:

*Salaries are too low in this very rural and isolated county to provide an incentive to commute 50-60 miles to the nearest college to earn minimum ECE requirements or even to commute to work. We arranged one class per year at the local high school, but it is not enough. The district doesn't kick in funding.*

Privately-operated preschool directors, whose programs were more likely to turn to private donations to augment state subsidies, also reported that the level of subsidy they received for their preschool program was insufficient to support adequate salaries. One such director reported that the program was working to change this condition by increasing the resources available to the center:

*To meet retaining/recruiting challenges, we are actively working to increase benefits, training, and private donations through the creation of a private fund development plan. Also, we're involved in advocating for legislation that will boost reimbursement from the state.*

A number of directors reported that assistant teachers, were particularly hard to recruit and retain, because their programs lacked sufficient funding to employ them as full-time, classified staff with benefits.

## Summary

While publicly- and privately-operated California State Preschool staff and programs differed in some important respects, they shared many of the same challenges in recruiting and retaining staff, albeit to different degrees. On balance, publicly-operated programs were more likely than privately-operated programs to have some of the conditions in place that are conducive to maintaining a skilled and stable staff. The publicly-operated programs offered substantially better health and pension benefits, tended to pay higher salaries, and experienced less staff turnover.

The educational attainment of State Preschool teachers was low in all auspices, however. Fewer than one-third of teachers in publicly-operated programs, and eight percent of teachers in privately-operated programs, had a BA degree or higher. One-third of assistant teachers had no college-level training related to early childhood education, which was likely to be a detriment to providing high-quality care in the classroom, and also indicated that programs had a limited ability to recruit teachers from within their ranks.

The modest educational attainment of teachers and assistant teachers in both publicly-operated and privately-operated State Preschool programs must be attributed, in part, to California's current state professional development standards. While these are more stringent than the state's staff requirements for non-subsidized child care programs, they only require early childhood education-related, college-level coursework short of an associate degree as the minimum for State Preschool teachers, and do not require any pre-service training for assistant teachers. By establishing an educational framework that requires a bachelor's degree only for Program Directors, the state's Child Development Permit Matrix sets a relatively low standard for education, in light of the educational requirements for teachers in other states, detailed elsewhere in this report.

Salaries for teachers and assistant teachers in publicly-operated and privately-operated programs were also very modest, both at the starting and highest levels, and according to directors, these salaries hindered programs' ability to recruit and retain better-qualified staff. Kindergarten teachers, for example, receive substantially higher mean salaries than preschool teachers for their work with children, and this functions as an incentive and reward for educational attainment. State Preschool directors of both program types shared a frustration about their inability to compete with kindergarten programs and with other industries for

better-prepared staff, and both identified the limited nature of state subsidies as a barrier. In the absence of offering better salaries, community-based and school district programs alike will be hard pressed to attract and retain teaching staff with higher levels of qualification.

California's State Preschool program has charted a middle course between the lower requirements of non-subsidized child care programs and the higher requirements of the K-12 public schools. As it now stands, any efforts to expand the capacity of the State Preschool system to serve additional children and to provide better-quality care are likely to be hampered by the limited salaries offered by these programs, and the resulting scarcity of well-educated staff.

## Endnotes

1 On the Capitol Doorstep, 1999.

2 Personal communication with Sharon Hawley, Consultant, Department of Education, Child Development Division. The exact proportion of school district, university and college, and community-based State Preschools in California is unknown.

3 Publicly-owned and operated centers are a distinct sector of the child care industry typically "designed to serve at-risk children and provide expanded services," according to the Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers Study (1995). The authors of this study include in this category centers owned and operated by municipalities, school districts, or colleges and universities.

4 *Programs* refer to the administrative bodies that oversee one or more individual State Preschool sites. *Sites* are geographically distinct entities that alone constitute a "single-site program," or, if affiliated with additional sites and jointly administered, comprise a "multiple-site program."

5 Significant at $p<.01$.

6 Between 1974 and 1979, State Preschool teachers were required by the State of California to have completed a bachelor's degree.

7 These requirements are part of a broader State of California professional development system, called the Child Development Permit Matrix, which outlines additional positions in centers (including Associate Teacher, Master Teacher, and Program Director) that State Preschool staff may hold.

8 Directors employed by school district-based preschools were more likely to have a BA and above than those employed by privately-operated, community agency-based preschools ($p<.05$). A higher percentage of school district teachers had completed a BA than those employed by community agencies, but the difference was not significant due to the small sample of community-based programs.

9 To translate hourly wages into an annual wage, when an annual wage was not provided, the reported hours and months of work were multiplied by the hourly wage. We report the calculated annual wage separately for staff employed more than and less than 20 hours per week, respectively.

10 Teachers who had completed the highest level of education were more likely to earn highest starting and highest upper-level hourly and annual salaries ($p<.001$).

11 Levels of lowest salaries paid in Santa Clara County programs were higher than those in Kern ($p<.05$) and Shasta Counties ($p<.01$). Similarly, levels of highest salaries in Santa Clara County programs were higher than those in Kern ($p<.01$) and Shasta Counties ($p<.01$).

12 Since not all programs employed staff at all educational levels, the higher salary figures for teachers in the sample with less education do not necessarily reflect a practice among centers of offering higher compensation to staff with lower levels of education. For example, a higher-paying center might employ only teachers who had completed some college as their highest level of education, rather than teachers with a BA degree or more.

13 Significant at $p<.05$.

14 Significant at $p<.001$.

15 Significant at $p<.001$.

16 Whitebook et al., 1996; Whitebook et al., 1990.

17 Significant at $p<.01$.

18 Significant at $p<.001$.

19 Significant at $p<.05$.

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# Georgia Prekindergarten Program

The Georgia Prekindergarten Program is designed to be "universal" – i.e., available to all four-year-old children in the state, regardless of family income. The program is provided at the community level by a variety of organizations that mirror the diversity of the state's broader child care delivery system, including school districts, universities and colleges, community-based nonprofit agencies, faith-based nonprofits, for-profit child care chains and for-profit independent programs. The Office of School Readiness, the state agency that administers the program, reports that there are 1,681 sites in operation throughout all of the state's counties, and that more than one-half of all sites (56 percent) are operated by programs outside of the public schools.[1]

Our survey sample was composed of 111 programs, operating at 477 sites, constituting about one-quarter of all Georgia Prekindergarten Program sites. The sample included programs operated by all six types of organizations noted above. Because of structural similarities, these six program types were combined in most of our analyses into three categories: publicly-operated, community-based nonprofit, and for-profit. (See Figure 1.) The counties in the sample – Baldwin, Bibb, DeKalb, Fulton, Gwinett, Jones, Paulding, Peach and Tift – were selected to represent urban, suburban and rural communities in Georgia.

**Figure 1: Sample of Georgia Prekindergarten Programs[2]**

**Publicly-Operated**
**includes:**
- **school districts**
- **universities and colleges**

**Privately-Operated Community-Based Nonprofit**
**includes:**
- **independent nonprofits**
- **faith-based nonprofits**

**Privately-Operated For-profit**
**includes:**
- **for-profit chains**
- **independent for-profits**

## Program Characteristics

Begun in 1993 to serve at-risk children, the Georgia Prekindergarten Program was expanded in 1995 to serve all four-year-olds regardless of family income. Solely supported by state lottery funds, it was the earliest universal state-funded prekindergarten program in the United States. In part, the state of Georgia expanded prekindergarten to serve more children by relying not only on school district and other publicly-operated programs, but on an array of for-profit and community-based nonprofit programs already in operation that served preschoolers and children of other ages.[3] In our sample, state funds constituted the primary funding source for the prekindergarten programs, regardless of auspice. Publicly-operated programs were more likely than for-profits or community-based nonprofits to receive additional funds from their local school districts to operate prekindergarten programs.



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Several other characteristics of prekindergarten programs differed, depending on auspice. For-profit programs were more likely than publicly-operated programs to serve infants, toddlers and school-age children[4] in addition to preschoolers.[5] Parent fees comprised a higher percentage of for-profit programs' total budgets for all ages served (58 percent) than of community-based nonprofit programs' budgets (35 percent).[6] Among for-profit programs, parent fees made up a significantly higher portion of budgets (66 percent) at chains than at independent centers (53 percent).[7] Independent nonprofits, faith-based nonprofits and independent for-profits received a higher percentage of their budgets from public subsidies, supporting the full range of services to all ages served, than did the for-profit chains.[8]

The Georgia Prekindergarten Program was offered by all program types primarily as a full-day (6.5-hour) program to four-year olds during a 10-month year. Lead teachers[9] and assistant teachers were employed 40 hours per week and 10 months per year, on average. Directors were employed 44 hours per week and 11 months per year, on average.[10] Lead teachers and assistant teachers employed by publicly-operated and for-profit programs were more likely to be employed for the typical 10-month prekindergarten schedule, whereas those employed by community-based nonprofits were more likely to be employed between 10 and 11 months, on average.[11]

The majority of programs (95 percent) offered a separate – and separately-funded – summer session for preschoolers or other age groups of children, with for-profits more likely to do so than publicly-operated programs.[12] Among those programs offering a summer session, approximately two-thirds (67 percent) reported that they employed prekindergarten teachers or assistant teachers to teach in a summer program separate from the prekindergarten program, a practice that did not differ by auspice.

Table 1: Characteristics of Surveyed Programs

| | |
|---|---|
| **Auspice** | Diverse prekindergarten delivery system including for-profits, nonprofits, and publicly-owned and operated programs |
| **Ages of Children Served by Pre-K** | 4 years |
| **Daily Schedule** | Full-day schedule serving one group of children |
| **Annual Schedule** | 10-month school district calendar. A separate summer program was offered by 95 percent of all programs. |
| **Sources of Funding** | 91 percent of funding was from state lottery dollars for all programs. Publicly-operated programs were more likely to augment state funds with school district support (7 percent of their total prekindergarten budget) than were other program types.[13] |
| **Number of Pre-K Staff* Employed Per Site** | 3 Lead Teachers, 3 Assistant Teachers and 1 On-site Director. |

* Others not involved in direct caregiving for preschool children, such as clerical or administrative staff, were not included in these results. Teaching staff who care for infants, toddlers or school-age children in sites that house Georgia Prekindergarten Programs were also not included in these results.

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## Demographic Characteristics of Teaching Staff

Prekindergarten teaching staff in Georgia, like other members of the U.S. child care workforce, were predominantly female. Most lead teachers and assistant teachers were between 20 and 39 years of age, making them younger as a group than found in other studies of the child care workforce.[14] Lead teachers typically comprised an older cohort of workers than assistant teachers.

Lead teachers and assistant teachers were ethnically diverse in our sample, with just over half of teachers and assistants being women of color. Community-based nonprofits were more likely to employ African American lead teachers (63 percent) than were publicly-operated programs (47 percent), and were less likely to employ European American teachers (33 percent vs. 53 percent). Overall, assistant teachers were more likely to be women of color than were lead teachers, with the disparity in ethnicity between lead teachers and assistant teachers being most evident in publicly-operated programs, where 30 percent of teachers and 52 percent of assistants were women of color.[15]

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Teaching Staff

| | Teachers | Assistant Teachers |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | 98% female | 98% female |
| **Age** | 70% between 20 and 39 years | 71% between 20 and 39 years |
| **Ethnicity** | 49% European American<br>47% African American<br>2% Latino<br>1% Asian American<br>1% Other | 38% European American<br>55% African American<br>3% Latino<br>1% Asian American<br>3% Other |

## Educational Background of Prekindergarten Staff

State of Georgia minimum requirements for prekindergarten teachers, which do not require a college-level degree, have been lower than those required by many other states; starting in fall 2002, however, these standards will rise. Thus far, the state has required that prekindergarten programs employ lead teachers and assistant teachers who meet educational standards just above those required for other state-licensed child care programs.[16] Prekindergarten lead teachers have been required, at a minimum, to have completed a Child Development Associate (CDA) or Child Development Professional (CDP) credential; these are nationally-recognized certificate programs, taking approximately one year to complete, that consist of classroom and on-the-job training.

Starting in the 2002-2003 school year, prekindergarten lead teachers will be required to have obtained an associate degree in child development or early childhood education, or a Montessori diploma, as minimum qualifications. Programs receiving prekindergarten funds must employ assistant teachers who are high school graduates or the equivalent. There are no educational requirements for on-site directors, but if the director also acts as a lead teacher in a program, she or he must meet the educational requirements for lead teachers.

The state indexes its per-child prekindergarten reimbursement rates to the educational qualifications of its teachers, with, for example, programs employing certified teachers with bachelor degrees eligible for higher-level reimbursements than those employing teachers at the minimum level of a CDA or CDP.[17] Minimum salary levels for prekindergarten teachers are set by the state, based on credentials specified by the Office of School Readiness.



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| Table 3: Minimum Educational Requirements for Georgia Prekindergarten Staff | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Assistant Teachers** | **Lead Teachers** | **On-site Directors** |
| High school diploma or its equivalent | Child Development Associate (CDA) or Child Development Professional (CDP): as of fall 2002: two-year Early Childhood Education degree or Montessori diploma | None |

Source: Georgia Office of School Readiness (2001).

Two-thirds (66 percent) of Georgia prekindergarten lead teachers had completed a bachelor's degree or above as their highest level of education. The large number of Georgia prekindergarten programs run by school districts, which have higher teacher standards than the state minimum, appeared to exert upward pressure on the state average.

Thirteen percent of lead teachers, however, had completed less than an associate degree in ECE at the time the data were collected – a situation they will be required to rectify by fall 2002. Key informants in Georgia for this study indicated that there was currently inadequate funding to assist teachers with only a CDA or CDP credential in obtaining additional coursework for the associate degree, and that the community colleges were insufficiently prepared to provide the needed courses in time. In their view, it would be a significant challenge to bring the lead teacher workforce into compliance with these new requirements by the fall 2002 deadline.[18]

Approximately three-quarters (60 percent) of directors had completed a bachelor's degree or above. In contrast to the educational attainment of lead teachers and directors, 40 percent of assistant teachers had completed no formal education above a high school diploma, and approximately one-half (49 percent) had completed some college credits as their highest level of education. Publicly-operated programs employed lead teachers and assistant teachers with much higher levels of education than did other programs. Most lead teachers (93 percent) employed by publicly-operated programs had completed a bachelor's degree or higher, whereas approximately one-half of lead teachers employed by privately-operated programs had completed a bachelor's degree or higher. (See Table 4.)



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Table 4 Educational Attainments of Prekindergarten Staff

| | Lead Teachers | Assistant Teachers | Directors |
|---|---|---|---|
| Master's degree and above | 10% | 0% | 28% |
| Bachelor's degree plus credential | 36% | 2% | 7% |
| Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) | 9% | 1% | 6% |
| Bachelor's degree (not in ECE) | 11% | 4% | 19% |
| Associate degree in ECE | 21% | 5% | 14% |
| Some college-level work in ECE, less than associate degree | 12% | 49% | 22% |
| No college-level ECE | 1% | 39% | 4% |

Table 5: Educational Characteristics of Staff, by Auspice

| | Lead teachers with a bachelor's degree or above[19] | Assistant teachers with an associate degree or above[20] | Directors with a bachelor's degree or above |
|---|---|---|---|
| Publicly-Operated | 93% | 47% | 86% |
| Community-Based Nonprofit | 48% | 9% | 64% |
| For-profit | 56% | 14% | 50% |
| Total | 59% | 17% | 56% |

## Compensation

Although prekindergarten lead teachers' mean annual salaries (across all program types) were approximately $10,000 higher than those offered to teachers in community-based child care programs in Georgia, they remained approximately $10,000 lower than those offered to kindergarten teachers. (See Figure 2.)

Prekindergarten lead teachers' salaries reflected the disparities in compensation offered by the publicly-operated programs (largely in school districts) and the for-profit and community-based nonprofit programs. While teachers employed by publicly-operated prekindergarten programs earned salaries in the range of those offered to public school kindergarten teachers, teachers in privately-operated programs earned much less. Teachers employed full-time by publicly-operated programs earned average annual starting salaries of $29,042, compared with $19,421 in community-based nonprofits and $18,080 in for-profits.[21] These disparities grew at the higher salary level, with teachers in publicly-operated programs earning $43,208 on average, compared with $23,679 in community-based nonprofits and $23,668 in for-profits.[22] (See Figure 3.)

Assistant teachers' wages were considerably lower, ranging from $7.47 to $8.69 per hour, or $13,122 to $15,143 annually. Assistant teachers



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employed by publicly-operated programs earned higher entry-level wages than those employed by other programs.[23] On-site directors' annual salaries ranged, on average, between $27,462 and $33,945. Directors employed by publicly-operated programs earned higher upper-tier salaries than did those employed by privately-operated programs.[24]

**Figure 2: Comparison of Mean Annual Salaries for Teachers in Georgia Child Care Centers, State Prekindergarten Programs, and Kindergartens**

| Program | Mean Annual Salary | |
|---|---|---|
| | $0 $10,000 $20,000 $30,000 $40,000 | |
| Community Child Care Centers | $11,708 | $14,735* |
| Prekindergarten Programs | $19,794 | $26,211** |
| Kindergartens | | $38,990*** |

* Source: U.S. Department of Labor, 2000.

**Mean lowest and highest annual salary.

***Source: U.S. Department of Labor, 2000.

**Figure 3: Mean Starting and Highest Wages in Georgia Prekindergarten Programs (Hourly and Annual)**

| Program | Mean Starting and Highest Wages | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Hourly | | | Annual | | |
| | Low | $0 $5 $10 $15 $20 $25 | High | Low | $0 $25,000 $50,000 | High |
| Publicly-Operated | | | | | | |
| Lead Teachers | $14.56 | | $21.66 | $29,042 | | $43,208 |
| Assistant Teachers | $7.69 | | $10.31 | $14,475 | | $19,512 |
| Directors | $14.48 | | $23.87 | $30,485 | | $49,470 |
| Community-Based Nonprofit | | | | | | |
| Lead Teachers | $10.09 | | $12.39 | $19,421 | | $23,679 |
| Assistant Teachers | $7.00 | | $8.08 | $12,876 | | $15,015 |
| Directors | $11.50 | | $16.53 | $23,809 | | $33,715 |
| For-Profit | | | | | | |
| Lead Teachers | $10.28 | | $13.22 | $18,080 | | $23,668 |
| Assistant Teachers | $7.56 | | $8.56 | $12,446 | | $14,238 |
| Directors | $11.45 | | $14.18 | $26,069 | | $31,729 |
| Total | | | | | | |
| Lead Teachers | $10.81 | | $14.15 | $19,794 | | $26,211 |
| Assistant Teachers | $7.47 | | $8.69 | $12,784 | | $15,051 |
| Directors | $11.79 | | $15.92 | $26,017 | | $34,350 |



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To qualify for state funding to operate a prekindergarten class, programs must agree to compensate teachers at the minimum levels established by the Office of School Readiness. A program employing better-educated teachers receives a higher reimbursement rate, and therefore has the means to compensate staff at or above the minimum requirements. (See Tables 6 and 7.) Teachers' compensation in Georgia reached or slightly exceeded the minimum required salaries. For example, teachers with a bachelor's degree and certification (36 percent of sample), who must be paid at least $24,287 per year according to state regulations, earned $25,674 at the average lowest salary level, and $30,377 at the average highest salary level. Teachers' salaries increased at each level of additional educational attainment. (See Figure 11.) Teachers with bachelor's degrees and certification earned five to 20 percent more than the state required minimums, although it was not possible to know from these data the distribution of teachers' salaries within this range.

Teachers employed by publicly-operated programs received much higher returns for their educational investments in early childhood education than did their counterparts in privately-operated programs. A teacher with a bachelor's degree and credential earned $16.31 to $21.63 per hour in a publicly-operated program, for example, but a teacher with the same credentials earned $13.11 to $14.14 in a community-based nonprofit or $12.57 to $14.65 in a for-profit program. This gap widened at the higher levels of education; teachers with a master's degree earned an average of $18.58 to $22.98 in publicly-operated programs, $11.36 to $11.83 in community-based nonprofits, and $10.84 to $11.01 in for-profit programs.

Directors' wages increased with additional educational attainment. (See Table 9.) Assistant teachers' wages increased, on average, with gains in education, although within a very limited range. Assistant teachers with no background in early childhood education beyond high school (40 percent of the sample) earned between $12,218 and $13,869 per year on average, while those with some college (49 percent of the sample) earned an average of $12,998 to $14,683.[25] Unlike teachers, assistant teachers did not receive higher compensation in publicly-operated programs for their educational investments.

Two-thirds of all programs (67 percent) employed at least one prekindergarten teacher or assistant teacher in a summer program[26] operated separately from the 10-month prekindergarten program. Community-based nonprofits and school district programs did not differ in the practice of employing prekindergarten teaching staff in summer programs. Teachers' wages in these summer programs ranged from $8.64 to $10.18 per hour on average – significantly lower than those offered by the same programs during the 10-month prekindergarten year[27] – but when these summer wages were broken down by auspice, the discrepancy between prekindergarten and summer teachers' wages disappeared in the publicly-operated programs and was strongest in for-profit programs.[28] Assistant teachers' wages did not differ between prekindergarten and summer programs.

Table 6: Required Minimum Annual Salaries for Georgia Prekindergarten Teachers

| | |
|---|---|
| **Bachelor's degree plus Certification in Early Childhood or Elementary Education** | $24,287 |
| **Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or related field** | $18,506 |
| **Associate degree in Early Childhood Education or Montessori diploma** | $15,422 |
| **Child Development Associate (CDA) or Child Development Professional (CDP)** | $12,337 |

Source: Georgia Office of School Readiness (2001).



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Table 7: Georgia Prekindergarten Program Per-Child Reimbursement Rates, by Teacher Educational Level, 2001-2002

| | | Bachelor's degree plus Certification | Four-Year College Degree | AA, AAS, AS or Technical two-year degree, or Montessori diploma | CDA/CCP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Private Sector Metro Atlanta | Weekly Rate | $96.52 | $86.05 | $80.24 | $74.44 |
| | Annual Rate | $3,474.87 | $3,097.78 | $2,888.73 | $2,679.68 |
| Public School Metro Atlanta | Weekly Rate | $86.43 | $73.26 | $67.45 | $61.64 |
| | Annual Rate | $3,111.60 | $2,637.27 | $2,428.23 | $2,219.18 |

Source: Georgia Office of School Readiness (2001).

Table 8: Mean Starting and Highest Wages of Lead Teachers, by Education

| | Starting or Lowest Wage/ Annual Salary* | Highest Hourly Wage/ Annual Salary* |
|---|---|---|
| Master's degree and above | $14.97 / $29,608 | $17.40 / $34,477 |
| Bachelor's degree plus credential | $13.40 / $25,674 | $15.95 / $30,377 |
| Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) | $12.42 / $22,287 | $14.25 / $25,494 |
| Bachelor's degree (not in ECE) | $11.27 / $20,804 | $12.38 / $22,737 |
| Associate degree in ECE | $9.53 / $17,456 | $10.79 / $19,682 |
| Some college-level work in ECE, less than associate degree | $8.61 / $15,091 | $10.15 / $18,278 |

* Includes only those teachers employed more than 20 hours per week.

Table 9: Mean Starting and Highest Wages of Directors, by Education

| | Starting or Lowest Wage | Highest Hourly Wage |
|---|---|---|
| Master's degree and above | $16.15 | $21.03 |
| Bachelor's degree plus credential | $12.78 | $17.36 |
| Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) | $15.47 | $19.36 |
| Bachelor's degree (not in ECE) | $12.93 | $15.75 |
| Associate degree in ECE | $11.38 | $13.54 |
| Some college-level work in ECE, less than associate degree | $10.38 | $11.95 |
| No college-level ECE | $7.79 | $13.29 |



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## Employee Benefit Plans

Publicly-operated programs were most likely to offer health benefits to lead teachers and assistant teachers, followed in descending order by community-based nonprofits and for-profits.[29] One-half of for-profit programs offered no coverage to lead teachers and assistant teachers, compared with eight percent of publicly-operated programs and one-quarter of community-based nonprofits.[30] Relatively few programs of any type offered fully-paid health insurance; approximately one-third of community-based nonprofits (32 percent) and publicly-operated programs (29 percent), and 11 percent of for-profits, offered such coverage to teachers. Publicly-operated programs were more likely than others to contribute to teacher retirement plans. (See Table 10.)

Table 10: Benefits

| | |
|---|---|
| **Health Benefits** | 61 percent offered health insurance to lead teachers, and 59 percent offered it to assistant teachers. Publicly-operated programs were more likely than for-profits to offer health insurance to lead teachers and assistant teachers.[31] |
| **Level of Health Coverage** | 17 percent of programs offered fully-paid health coverage. Publicly-operated programs and community-based nonprofits were almost twice as likely to offer lead teachers, assistant teachers and directors fully-paid coverage as were for-profit programs.[32] |
| **Pension Plan** | 86 percent of publicly-operated programs regularly contributed to a pension plan for teachers, compared with 45 percent of community-based nonprofits and 38 percent of for-profits.[33] |

## Unionization

Publicly-operated prekindergarten programs were not unionized in Georgia, whereas unions are a feature of school district Pre-K employment in most other states. From the total sample, only two programs (2 percent), both of them community-based nonprofits, reported employing unionized teaching staff.

## Turnover

Teaching staff turnover in prekindergarten programs in this sample was substantially higher (26 percent) than among K-12 teachers, which is approximately five percent annually.[34] Publicly-operated programs experienced less lead teacher and assistant teacher turnover than other program types. Lead teacher turnover was higher in for-profit than in publicly-operated programs, and



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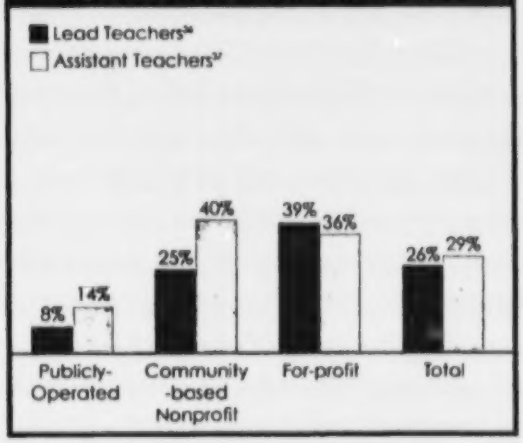
assistant teacher turnover was higher both in for-profit programs and in community-based nonprofits than in publicly-operated programs. For-profit chains had the highest turnover among lead teachers (41 percent) and assistant teachers (44 percent) of any of the program types. Director turnover, which averaged 10 percent annually, did not differ by program type. (See Figure 4.)

Lead teacher turnover was significantly higher in prekindergarten programs paying lower starting and upper-tier teacher wages. Programs paying lead teachers above the median starting wage of $10.12 per hour, for example, reported teacher turnover of 29 percent, compared to 42 percent for those programs paying less than the median.[35] (See Figure 5.) The pension package offered to assistant teachers and directors in publicly-operated programs, which surpassed that offered by for-profits and community-based nonprofits, may have encouraged assistant teachers and directors to remain in their positions, and may account in part for lower turnover there.

Figure 4: Annual Turnover, by Auspice*




* Results describe annual turnover reported at the site level.

## Directors' Views on Recruiting and Retaining Staff

Directors were more likely in privately-operated programs than in publicly-operated programs to identify teaching staff recruitment and retention as a growing problem. Only 15 percent of directors of publicly-operated programs reported that it had become more difficult to employ and retain qualified staff in the last three years, compared with 50 percent of community-based nonprofits and 46 percent of for-profits.[38] Asked about the barriers they encountered in recruiting new staff or rewarding valued staff, directors of privately-operated programs were more likely to cite low wages, inadequate benefits, and competition from kindergarten and other elementary school employers than were publicly-operated program directors.

Figure 15: Annual Lead Teacher Turnover,* by Hourly Wage

| Lead Teacher | Turnover | 0% —— 100% |
|---|---|---|
| Earning below median starting wage of $10.12 | 42% | |
| Earning above median starting wage of $10.12 | 29% | |
| Earning below median high wage of $12.98 | 47% | |
| Earning above median high wage of $12.98 | 23% | |

* Results describe annual turnover reported at the program level.





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(See Table 11). Comments by directors of privately-operated programs about the difficulties of attracting and retaining qualified staff included the following:

*There is high turnover in the private sector. As soon as teaching staff can obtain the qualifications, they are off to the public schools. We can always [recruit] teaching staff, but we cannot keep them.*

*We encourage teachers to increase education. The state funding doesn't allow us to pay degreed teachers, with a bachelor's or associate, for example, adequate salaries. The state needs to increase funding levels. Recruiting and retention is challenging due to our location, low salaries and inadequate benefits.*

*There is fierce competition [for teaching staff]. Schools come and recruit from our center...the state minimum salaries are way too low. I pay more because I couldn't ask anyone to work for that. You go into a hole if you run a quality program.*

Directors of community-based nonprofits and for-profits indicated that their programs lacked sufficient funding from the state to support adequate salaries and to attract better-qualified staff.

Directors of community-based nonprofits and for-profits described a constellation of factors as particularly challenging to their programs. A state-mandated class-size reduction policy has led to a shortage of qualified prekindergarten (as well as K-12) teachers in Georgia. The consequences of a more limited pool of applicants overall, and higher wages and benefits offered by publicly-operated prekindergartens and K-12 schools, have led to what privately-operated program directors identified repeatedly as a heightened state of competition for increasingly scarce teachers. Directors of privately-operated programs felt that in the absence of adequate funding, they couldn't compete with the publicly-operated programs, which they viewed as aggressive recruiters. Directors commented:

*Salaries are very competitive in our area. Teachers drop you flat for 25 cents more per hour.*

*We go to colleges to try and recruit, but it isn't easy. There is lots of competition from other schools.*

*We're competitive with private centers, but we lose out to Head Start which is able to provide benefits. We have lots of applicants with no experience and a limited number of qualified applicants.*

*Although our hours are good, our salaries are low. We cannot compete with public school salaries.*

*The challenge in recruitment is competition from public schools. It's not easy to recruit....Pre-K teachers often have skills and experience, but still receive lower funding because of the lack of or the type of degree they hold. After a few years, they begin to burn out, working for so low a salary.*

Limited state funding was identified by community-based nonprofit and for-profit directors as the primary cause of low salaries and high turnover in their programs.

*In Georgia, funding and wages are too low to keep qualified teachers.*

*Funding has not increased in the last 5.5 years while costs continue to rise. There is no provision in the funding to account for our teachers' years of experience with us, leaving no incentive for teachers to stay. We lose teachers to the public schools.*

*We cannot pay decent salaries because our funding is too low and the ceiling for salaries within the funding is too low. We lose qualified teachers to the public schools. We use the TEACH program to raise salaries and education. We need better quality from the top at the Office of School Readiness on down.*

It is interesting to note that one director identified the state required salaries as "ceilings" when, in fact, they are intended to serve as a minimal salary floor. In the absence of adequate funding,

the state salary requirements may function more as a salary ceiling.

Publicly-operated program directors identified K-12 teacher shortages as an issue of concern, but did not appear to have felt the influence of the tight labor market or low funding on their ability to recruit teachers. Assistant teacher turnover appeared to be more of a problem. Directors of publicly-operated programs commented:

*We have not had a lot of trouble with recruitment in the past. However, the current teacher shortage may make it difficult in the future. Most of our teachers have been with us for many years. The rate of turnover for assistants is much higher.*

*[Recruitment for teachers] is not a real problem. We pay at the same rate as other grades. For assistants, it is more of a struggle to keep our staff. Because of the low pay, we offer other advantages to keep our assistants. These include good benefits, hours, working conditions and hiring within the community.*

By being able to draw on more generous funding from school districts and better benefit packages for staff, the publicly-operated programs have been better able to weather the shortage of qualified teaching staff in Georgia.

Table 11: Barriers to Recruiting and Retaining Staff: Responses from All Directors

| | |
|---|---|
| **Low wages**[39] | 18% publicly-operated<br>58% community-based nonprofit<br>75% for-profit |
| **Inadequate benefits**[40] | 0% publicly-operated<br>32% community-based nonprofit<br>41% for-profit |
| **Competition from kindergarten and other elementary school employers**[41] | 18% publicly-operated<br>68% community-based nonprofit<br>63% for-profit |

## Summary

The variety of organizations operating prekindergarten programs in Georgia has allowed the state to expand this system rapidly in order to serve all four-year-olds, and has also created a broad constituency of child care employers in support of Pre-K services.[42] In many ways, however, Georgia's diverse prekindergarten delivery system mirrors the challenges experienced by the broader child care community in adequately compensating and retaining their well-qualified teaching and administrative staff. Basic inequities in compensation and benefits between publicly- and privately-operated programs have resulted in two "parallel universes" of prekindergarten, in which publicly-operated programs enjoy lower turnover and attract better-qualified staff, on a par with K-12 teachers, and privately-operated program directors compete with one another to retain a dwindling number of qualified teachers, many of whom move on to public school employment. Judging from teacher turnover rates of 26 to 43 percent in privately-operated programs, staff and the families and children they serve are experiencing substantial instability – a level of disturbance relatively unknown in the publicly-operated programs.

But despite the significant challenges faced by the Georgia Prekindergarten Program, there are some encouraging signs. By instituting minimum salary guidelines linked to teachers' educational attainment and indexing reimbursement to these qualifications, the state of Georgia has established a critical funding mechanism to reward programs for reaching higher educational staff standards. Overall, the percentage of lead teachers with a bachelor's degree or above was relatively high in all program types, ranging from 48 percent in community-based programs to 93 percent in publicly-operated programs. Programs reached or slightly exceeded the state of Georgia minimum salary requirements, on average – yet for the lower-paying community nonprofit and for-profit programs, the minimum requirements appeared to have functioned more as a wage ceiling than as a floor. Only the publicly-operated programs, whose upper-tier staff earned as much as $20,000 a year above the wage minimum, appeared to



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be able to use these wage-floor requirements as they were intended – as starting points for advancement up a scale.

While some directors indicated an interest in rewarding teachers' job tenure regardless of educational attainment, most voiced a strong desire to attract and retain better-educated staff. By establishing funding levels that reward programs for employing better-educated staff, the state provides an important incentive for programs to do so. But unless basic funding levels are increased so that community-based nonprofits and for-profits can surpass the state minimum salary levels and offer improved benefits, privately-operated programs will face substantial barriers in their efforts to improve teaching staff compensation, recruitment and retention.

## Endnotes

1 Schulman, Blank & Ewen, 1999.

2 The term "programs" refers to the administrative bodies that oversee one or more individual prekindergarten sites. "Sites" are geographically distinct entities that alone constitute a "single-site program," or, if affiliated with additional sites and jointly administered, comprise a "multi-site program."

3 In implementing its Universal Pre-K program, New York has relied on a similar strategy of expansion through contracting with privately-operated programs.

4 Respondents were asked about the provision of before- and after-school care for school-age children.

5 $p<.01$.

6 $p<.01$.

7 $p<.05$.

8 For-profit chains received less funding from public subsidies than did, in descending order, independent nonprofits ($p<.001$), independent for-profits ($p<.01$), or faith-based nonprofits ($p<.05$).

9 "Lead teacher" is the term used in Georgia to describe prekindergarten staff members who have the primary teaching and supervisory responsibility in a classroom.

10 School principals were not included in our findings on directors. The Georgia Prekindergarten Program uses the title "project director" for those who oversee multiple Pre-K sites, and "site director" for those who oversee a single site. Site directors only – not project directors – are included in our study findings.

11 Community-based nonprofits were more likely to employ teachers and assistant teachers for more months each year than public or for-profit programs ($p<.05$).

12 All for-profit programs (100 percent) surveyed reported providing a separate summer program, compared with 72 percent of publicly-operated programs ($p<.01$). Ninety-four percent of community-based nonprofits offered a separate summer session.

13 Public programs were more likely to receive school district funds than for-profit ($p<.001$) or community-based programs ($p<.01$).

14 Whitebook et al., 1990.

15 Lead teachers were more likely than assistant teachers to be European American in all programs ($p<.05$). Lead teachers employed in publicly-operated programs were more likely than assistant teachers to be European American ($p<.05$). The difference in ethnicity between assistant teachers and lead teachers was not significant in analyses of this relationship in community-based nonprofits and for-profits.

16 To qualify to teach in a Georgia child care program, teachers need only to have completed high school or one year of child care experience, and assistant teachers have no preservice requirements (Administration and Staff Requirements for Day Care Centers, Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia, Office of Regulatory Services, Georgia Department of Human Resources).

17 $p<.05$.

18 Reimbursement rates are also tied to the programs' location in the state, with those in metropolitan Atlanta eligible for higher funding than those located elsewhere.

19 Communication with Pat Minish, Executive Director, Georgia Association for the Education of Young Children, and Nick Craft of the Georgia Childcare Leadership Forum.

20 Lead teachers employed by publicly-operated programs were more likely to have completed a bachelor's degree or higher than those employed by community-based nonprofits or for-profits ($p<.05$).

21 Assistant teachers employed by publicly-operated programs were more likely to have completed an associate degree or higher than those employed by community-based nonprofits or for-profits ($p<.05$).

22 Lead teachers employed by publicly-operated programs earned higher starting salaries than those employed by community-based nonprofits or for-profits ($p<.05$).

23 Lead teachers employed by publicly-operated programs earned higher upper-tier salaries than those employed by community-based nonprofits or for-profits ($p<.05$).

24 Assistant teachers employed by publicly-operated programs earned higher starting wages than those employed by faith-

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based programs and for-profit chains ($p<.01$) and community-based nonprofits and independent for-profit programs ($p<.05$).

25 $p<.05$.

26 Assistant teachers with higher levels of education received higher pay, on average ($p<.01$).

27 Directors who did not operate 12-month prekindergarten programs were asked whether they operated any separate summer programs for other children.

28 Average starting pay in summer programs was $8.65 per hour, vs. $10.11 offered during the school year ($N=51$; $p<.001$) and average highest pay was lower than $13.13 offered by these programs during the school year ($N=50$; $p<.001$).

29 For-profit programs, which comprised the largest portion of the sample employing at least one prekindergarten staff person in a summer program ($N=39$), offered $8.35 as a starting summer wage to lead teachers ($10.08 was the starting prekindergarten salary) and $10.08 at the highest level (vs. $13.12 during the prekindergarten program year) ($p<.001$). Community-based nonprofits ($N=9$) offered lower summer salaries to higher-paid teachers than they did during the prekindergarten program year ($p<.05$).

30 Health insurance benefits (but not necessarily full coverage) are legally mandated in Georgia for public school-based prekindergarten teachers.

31 Publicly-operated programs were more likely to offer some coverage to lead teachers and assistant teachers than were for-profits. ($p<.05$).

32 All publicly-operated programs (100 percent) offered some coverage to lead teachers and assistant teachers, compared with 64 percent of for-profits to lead teachers ($p<.01$) and 61 percent of for-profits to assistant teachers ($p<.01$).

33 Publicly-operated and community-based programs were more likely to offer fully-paid coverage to lead teachers, assistant teachers and directors than were for-profits ($p<.05$).

34 Publicly-operated programs were more likely to contribute to lead teachers' retirement plans than were for-profits ($p<.01$) or community-based nonprofits ($p<.05$).

35 National Center for Education Statistics, 1995.

36 Turnover levels above and below the median wage are presented for illustrative purposes. Programs that paid higher entry and upper-tier salaries to lead teachers experienced significantly less turnover than those which paid less, using a one-tailed significance test ($p<.05$).

37 For-profits had significantly more lead teacher turnover than did publicly-operated programs ($p<.01$).

38 For-profits and community-based programs had significantly more assistant teacher turnover than did publicly-operated programs ($p<.05$).

39 $p<.05$.

40 Publicly-operated program directors were less likely to report low wages as a challenge than were for-profit directors ($p<.01$) or community-based nonprofit directors ($p<.05$).

41 Publicly-operated program directors were less likely to report inadequate benefits as a challenge than were for-profit directors ($p<.01$) or community-based nonprofit directors ($p<.05$).

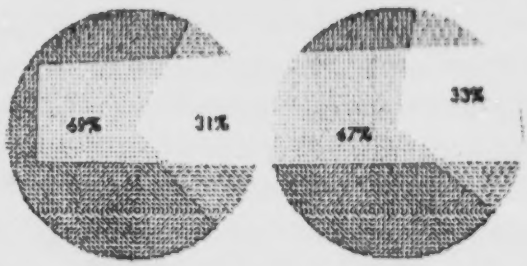
42 Publicly-operated program directors were less likely to report competition from kindergarten and other elementary school employers as a challenge than were community-based nonprofit directors ($p<.01$) or for-profit directors ($p<.05$).

43 Roden (1999).

# Chicago Prekindergarten Programs

State-funded prekindergarten programs operating in the city of Chicago offer an instructive case study of the differences between programs provided by public school districts and those offered by privately-operated nonprofit child care centers. While most prekindergarten programs[1] in Illinois are operated under the auspices of public school districts, a sizeable portion of Chicago Pre-K programs are privately operated by community-based child care centers (22 percent).[2] By state legislative mandate, the Chicago Public Schools receive a substantial share (38 percent) of state prekindergarten Early Childhood Block Grant funds to provide services to the children of eligible families, either through the schools or through subcontracts to privately-operated centers.[3] Out of a total of 421 Pre-K programs operating in Illinois, 127 are offered in Chicago.[4]

Figure 1: Sample of Chicago Prekindergarten Programs




*Includes a small number of prekindergarten sites (N=3) operated by a public university or community college.

Privately-operated programs were oversampled in this study in order to permit an adequate sample size for investigating differences between public and private auspices in operating prekindergarten services, in a geographic area where labor market conditions and cost of living levels would be consistent. This sample is therefore not intended to be representative of Pre-K programs throughout Illinois. Rather, it offers a window into two distinct program types offering prekindergarten services in Chicago.

## Program Characteristics

Illinois' state-funded prekindergarten effort has been in operation since 1986. In 1999, it was incorporated into a broader initiative, including a parent training program and other services aimed at teen and first-time parents.[5] Chicago's prekindergarten programs, like those throughout the state, are designed to serve children ages three to five who are at risk of future academic difficulties because of living in poverty, having teen parents, speaking English as a second language, and/or needing social services. Children must meet multiple criteria, and are screened to assess their eligibility for Pre-K enrollment and allied services. Although most children served in Illinois Pre-K programs come from low-income families, there are no income eligibility guidelines.

While privately-operated and public school district prekindergarten programs in our Chicago sample shared these basic guidelines and programmatic goals, however, they diverged in many respects. Privately-operated programs were more likely than school district programs to offer prekindergarten services as one component of a larger program or center that also cared for infants, toddlers and/or school-age children. They were also more likely

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than school district programs to offer prekindergarten as a full-year program. Further, 27 percent of privately-operated programs, but only four percent of school district programs, offered full-day, "wrap-around" care to children enrolled in Pre-K.[6] Teachers and assistant teachers employed by school district programs worked fewer hours per week, and had longer periods off in the summer. (See Tables 1 and 2.)

Since Illinois Pre-K funding covers only a 2.5- to three-hour day, and since privately-operated Pre-K sites were far more likely to offer full-day and full-year services, the privately-operated programs tended to rely on more diverse funding sources than did those based in the school district. These sources included parent fees (14 percent of programs) private donations (8 percent) and other public subsidies (78 percent). School district Pre-K programs relied exclusively on state prekindergarten and school district funds. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Characteristics of Surveyed Programs

| | |
|---|---|
| **Auspice** | 78 % of all programs in Chicago were publicly operated, almost exclusively through the Chicago Public Schools; 22% were privately operated. |
| **Ages of children served** | Ages 3-5 |
| **Number of children served (2001-2002)** | Publicly-operated programs: 17,000<br>Privately-operated programs: 3,800 |
| **Daily schedule** | 90% of school district programs provided two half-day sessions each day, serving two distinct groups of children; no privately-operated programs offered two half-day sessions.[7]<br>96% of privately-operated programs offered full-day care to one group of children; only 10% of school district programs did so.[8] |
| **Annual schedule** | Few school district prekindergarten programs were open in the summer (14%), compared with most privately-operated programs (91%), which typically operated full-year programs.[9] |
| **Sources of funding for Pre-K programs** | School district prekindergartens received 93% of their funding from the State of Illinois. Privately-operated programs received 63% of their Pre-K funding from the state, and were more likely to rely on other public contracts,[10] parent fees[11] and donations[12] to supplement these funds. |
| **Average number of teaching and administrative staff employed per site*** | 2 teachers, 2 assistant teachers and 0.5 directors |

*Directors were asked about the number of staff serving children enrolled in the Pre-K program they administered. Others not involved in direct caregiving for children, such as clerical or administrative staff, were not included in these results, nor were teaching staff who cared for infants, toddlers or school-age children in sites that housed Pre-K programs.



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| Table 2: Average Work Schedule by Position | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **School District Progams** | **Privately-Operated Programs** |
| **Teachers** | **Hours Per Week** | 31 hours | 39 hours[13] |
| | **Months Per Year** | 10 months | 12 months[14] |
| **Assistant Teachers** | **Hours Per Week** | 35 hours | 39 hours[15] |
| | **Months Per Year** | 10 months | 12 months[16] |
| **Directors** | **Hours Per Week** | 39 hours | 41 hours |
| | **Months Per Year** | 11 months | 12 months[17] |

## Demographic Characteristics of Teaching Staff

Prekindergarten teaching staff were predominantly female, and typically were between 30 and 49 years of age. Privately-operated programs were more likely to employ teachers and assistant teachers under the age of 29 than were school district programs.[18] Teachers and assistant teachers were ethnically diverse, approximately matching the city of Chicago's overall ethnic composition. (See Table 3.)

| Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Chicago Pre-K Teaching Staff | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Teachers** | **Assistant Teachers** |
| **Gender** | 97% female | 97% female |
| **Age** | Most between 30 and 49 | Most between 30 and 39 |
| **Ethnicity** | 46% African American<br>33% European American<br>20% Latino<br>1% Asian American<br>1% Other | 49% African American<br>10% European American<br>37% Latino<br>1% Asian American<br>2% Other |

## Educational Background of Prekindergarten Staff

The Illinois Department of Education has established rigorous educational requirements for prekindergarten teaching staff, equivalent to those for public school teachers of older children. Since the inception of the state's Pre-K program, teachers have been required to complete a bachelor's degree, as well as an Early Childhood Education credential (initially called a Type 02 Certificate) comprised of post-baccalaureate coursework. As of 1997, all teachers newly employed in state-funded Pre-K programs were required to have completed a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education along with a new Type 04 Certificate, involving additional training in reading instruction. Teachers with a Type 02 Certificate were eligible to convert it to Type 04 without completing the additional reading instruction training, but were not eligible to teach kindergarten under that scenario.

According to state regulations, teachers employed either in privately-operated or school district prekindergarten programs must now hold a Type 04 Certificate. Teachers with a bachelor's degree and a valid out-of-state Early Childhood Education certificate are eligible for a one-year provisional Pre-K teaching credential while they work toward meeting the Illinois regulations. Figure 5 represents the minimum pre-service educational requirements that staff must meet to hold teacher, assistant teacher and director positions in Pre-K programs.

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| Table 4: Minimum Educational Requirements for Illinois Pre-K Staff | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Assistant Teachers** | **Teachers** | **On-site Directors** |
| 30 semester hours of Early Childhood Education (ECE) coursework. | Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and ECE credential (Type 04 certification) | No pre-service requirements |

Source: Illinois State Board of Education: effective 1998.

Three-quarters (75 percent) of all Pre-K teachers had completed a bachelor's degree and certification or higher, with the remainder having completed a bachelor's degree only (12 percent), or an associate degree or less (14 percent). One-third of teachers (30 percent) had completed a master's degree or above, surpassing the state requirements. All assistant teachers employed by Pre-K programs had completed at least some college-level training in Early Childhood Education, and one-third had completed an associate degree or above. Directors' educational profiles were comparable to those of teachers, with 83 percent having completed a bachelor's degree and certification or higher. (See Table 5.) Teachers employed by school district programs were more likely to have completed a bachelor's degree or above than their counterparts in privately-operated programs. (See Table 6.)

Pre-K teachers who had completed less than the required bachelor's degree and certification (28 percent) were employed primarily by privately-operated programs. Those teachers with a bachelor's degree but no certification (12 percent) could be provisionally employed for one year. Teachers without bachelor's degrees (16 percent) could be employed in prekindergarten programs that used the "Home-Based Model," in which non-certified teachers are supervised by certified teachers for at least two to three hours each day in the classroom.[19] As detailed below, directors of privately-operated Pre-K programs in Chicago faced particular difficulties in attracting and retaining staff with Type 04 Certification.

| Table 5: Educational Attainments of Pre-K Staff | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Teachers** | **Assistant Teachers** | **Directors** |
| **Master's degree and above** | 31% | 1% | 54% |
| **Bachelor's degree plus Type 04 certification*** | 40% | 0% | 27% |
| **Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE)** | 8% | 1% | 5% |
| **Bachelor's degree (not in ECE)** | 4% | 2% | 5% |
| **Associate degree in ECE** | 11% | 26% | 0% |
| **Some college-level work in ECE, less than associate degree** | 5% | 57% | 8% |
| **No college-level work in ECE** | 0% | 15% | 0% |

* This credential certifies that the staff member has completed post-baccalaureate work to qualify to teach in an elementary school. It reflects a concentration in elementary or early childhood education.



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| Table 6: Educational Characteristics of Staff, by Auspice | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Teachers with a bachelor's degree and above[20]** | **Assistant Teachers with an associate degree and above** | **Directors with a bachelor's degree and above** |
| **School district programs** | 97% | 32% | 81% |
| **Privately-operated programs** | 66% | 51% | 91% |
| **Total** | 87% | 38% | 88% |

## Compensation

Salaries for Pre-K teachers and assistant teachers differed dramatically according to whether they worked in publicly-operated or privately-operated programs. In school district Pre-K programs, teachers' hourly wages translated to average annual salaries of $33,116 to $49,068, comparable to those of public school kindergarten teachers ($42,230 on average),[21] and assistant teachers earned $16,871 to $21,673. Teachers and assistant teachers employed by privately-operated programs, however, earned considerably lower salaries, despite having significantly longer work schedules than their school district counterparts. In the private nonprofit sector, teachers earned an annual average of $24,082 to $29,161,[22] and assistant teachers earned $13,793 to $18,832. (See Tables 2 and 7.)

Directors employed by school district programs also earned higher salaries than those in privately-operated programs. In the school district Pre-K sites, directors' salaries – at an average of $42,083 to $45,763 per year – were similar to or slightly lower than those of teachers, a notable trend given the additional administrative responsibilities of the director position. Directors of privately-operated programs, however, earned from $31,891 to $39,711 per year. (See Table 7.)

This disparity in compensation between publicly-operated and privately-operated programs appeared to be due to several causes. Since state Pre-K funding covers only half-day services during the academic year, the privately-operated programs – which were far more likely to offer full-day, wrap-around, full-year care to one group of children – had to rely on a lower overall funding base, including child care block grant funds and parent fees. Some privately-operated programs may also have felt the need, even with this less generous funding base, to create wage parity between Pre-K teachers and other teachers working within the center or agency. Finally, the school district-based Pre-K teachers were far more likely to be unionized, with a contract that guaranteed them better compensation and rewards for seniority.

In both types of programs, Pre-K teachers with higher levels of education earned higher compensation.[23] Better-educated teachers employed by privately-operated programs, however, did not receive wages on a par with those offered to better-educated teachers employed by the school district. Master's degree-level teachers employed by the school district, for example, earned an average hourly wage of $25.55 to $28.71, whereas their counterparts in privately-operated programs earned roughly $10.00 less per hour, at an average of $15.76 to $17.16. (See Figure 2.)

Like teachers, directors received higher salaries in exchange for higher levels of education, particularly in school district programs. Directors with a master's degree or higher earned an average lowest hourly wage of $20.44 in school district programs, compared with $17.09 in privately-operated



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programs. Assistant teachers' salaries were related to their education only at the starting salary levels, suggesting that for those earning higher salaries, seniority or some other criterion may have had a stronger influence on compensation.

**Table 7: Mean Starting and Highest Wages, by Auspice**

| | | Teachers | Assistant Teachers | Directors |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| School district programs | Low | $21.14 | $ 9.81 | $20.16 |
| | High | $32.22 | $12.51 | $26.58 |
| Privately-operated programs | Low | $12.44 | $ 7.46 | $15.08 |
| | High | $14.86 | $ 9.86 | $19.26 |
| Total | Low | $18.54 | $ 9.04 | $16.59 |
| | High | $26.94 | $11.61 | $21.09 |

**Figure 2: Mean Hourly Wages of Teachers, by Education**

| Education | Starting or Lowest Wage | Highest Hourly Wage |
|---|---|---|
| | $0 $5 $10 $15 $20 $25 $30 $35 $40 $45 | |
| Master's degree and above | | |
| School District Pre-K Teachers | $23.55 | $32.30 |
| Pre-K Teachers in Privately-Operated Programs | $15.76 | $17.16 |
| Bachelor's degree plus credential | | |
| School District Pre-K Teachers | $21.04 | $26.38 |
| Pre-K Teachers in Privately-Operated Programs | $13.43 | $15.24 |
| Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) | | |
| School District Pre-K Teachers | $22.30 | $27.89 |
| Pre-K Teachers in Privately-Operated Programs | $13.63 | $13.25 |
| Bachelor's degree (not in ECE) | | |
| School District Pre-K Teachers | $25.33 | $30.76 |
| Pre-K Teachers in Privately-Operated Programs | * | * |
| Associate degree in ECE | | |
| School District Pre-K Teachers | $15.47 | $15.47 |
| Pre-K Teachers in Privately-Operated Programs | $ 9.32 | $11.17 |
| Some college-level work in ECE, less than associate degree | | |
| School District Pre-K Teachers | $10.62 | $11.60 |
| Pre-K Teachers in Privately-Operated Programs | $ 8.83 | $10.14 |

* No teachers employed by privately-operated programs had completed a bachelor's degree not in ECE as their highest level of training.



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While all Pre-K teaching staff had access to employer-sponsored health insurance, fewer than half of programs (42 percent) offered fully-paid insurance. School district teaching staff were more likely than privately-operated program staff to receive pension benefits. (See Table 8.)

Table 8. Benefits

| | |
|---|---|
| **Health Benefits** | 100 percent offered health insurance to teachers and assistant teachers. |
| **Level of Health Insurance Coverage** | 42 percent of all programs offered fully-paid coverage to teachers and assistant teachers. School district and privately-operated programs did not differ in the level of coverage that they offered.[24] |
| **Pension Plan** | 98 percent of school district programs, and 71 percent of privately-operated programs, contributed to a pension plan for teachers.[25] |

## Unionization

School-district Pre-K teaching staff were far more likely to be represented by a union (98 percent) than were their counterparts in privately-operated programs (five percent).[26]

## Turnover

Given the many differences noted between Chicago's school district and privately-operated Pre-K programs, it is not surprising that the programs contended with different levels of staff turnover. Turnover for all staff positions was significantly higher in privately-operated programs than in school district programs.[27] Directors of privately-operated programs reported that over half of the teachers (52 percent) and 36 percent of the assistant teachers had left in the past year (2001-2002), a level of instability that challenged not only the quality of services that directors and teaching staff could offer, but the well-being of the at-risk children and families that these programs served. Director turnover in these programs, at 40 percent, was higher than typically found for this job classification.[28] But school district programs were hardly immune from turnover themselves, losing 20 percent of their teachers in the past year – a rate of attrition significantly higher than the six-percent level found among K-12 teachers nationally. This may have been somewhat due to the relatively low status and recognition of Pre-K teachers within the K-12 school system, an issue repeatedly raised in focus groups. (See Figure 3.)

The influence of turnover on Pre-K programs was evident in their staffing arrangements. Approximately one-fifth of all programs (18 percent) reported that at least one open teacher position was filled by a long-term substitute or "floater." The likelihood of using long-term substitutes or floaters did not differ between school district and privately-operated programs. One-quarter of school district Pre-K teachers (25 percent) and one-half of privately-operated program teachers (51 percent) had been employed less than one year at the time of the interview, constituting a significant difference in staff tenure.[29]



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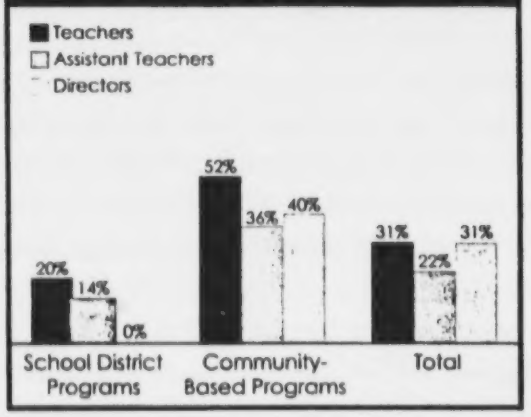
Programs' experience with staff turnover was, in part, a function of the wages they offered to staff. Programs offering higher upper-range salaries enjoyed significantly more stability among teachers, assistant teachers and directors.[30] Programs paying below the median highest hourly wage for teachers experienced turnover rates approximately three times higher than those paying above the median. (See Figures 4 and 5.) Pre-K programs appeared better able to retain staff in all positions when they offered salary increases over the length of employees' tenure. Turnover was not significantly correlated, however, with whether programs provided health benefits.

**Figure 3: Annual Turnover***




* Figure describes annual turnover reported at the site level.

**Figure 4: Annual Teacher Turnover*, by Wage[31]**

| Teachers | Turnover | 0% ——— 100% |
|---|---|---|
| Earning below median starting wage of $18.86 | 42% | |
| Earning above median starting wage of $18.86 | 16% | |
| Earning below median high wage of $30.66 | 47% | |
| Earning above median high wage of $30.66 | 13% | |

* Figure describes annual turnover reported at the program level.

**Figure 5: Annual Assistant Teacher Turnover*, by Wage[32]**

| Assistant Teachers | Turnover | 0% ——— 100% |
|---|---|---|
| Earning below median starting wage of $9.79 | 27% | |
| Earning above median starting wage of $9.79 | 17% | |
| Earning below median high wage of $12.00 | 35% | |
| Earning above median high wage of $12.00 | 8% | |

* Figure describes annual turnover reported at the program level.



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## Directors' Views on Recruiting and Retaining Staff

Directors' opinions about the difficulty of recruiting and retaining staff provided further evidence of stark differences between school district and privately-operated programs. Private program directors mentioned low wages as a barrier to recruitment and retention (particularly of Type 04 Certified staff) much more often than did school district directors. The following are several comments from privately-operated program directors:

*[We cannot] find teachers competitively with the public schools.*

*To meet this challenge of hiring qualified staff, we advertise everywhere, but cannot find Type 04 staff. We offer $30,000 for Type 04, but we're located in the inner city, which is a problem for some.*

*Finding a master teacher is hard because we cannot find anyone with Type 04 certification.*

*Low salaries [are our] number-one challenge. We have to compete with public schools.*

*I'm concerned about universal Pre-K. There isn't enough staff as is. Will we give up on quality? All-day programs need consistent, quality care.*

While school district Pre-K directors were generally able to approach or match K-12 teacher salaries in what they offered, as well as offering a 10-month employment year, privately-operated program directors found themselves in tough competition with the schools. And although health benefits did not appear to vary substantially between school district and privately-operated programs, private program directors were more likely to cite inadequate benefits as a problem, perhaps reflecting disparities in other benefits noted above, such as pension plans and annual leave. Privately-operated Pre-K program directors reported:

*No one wants to work 12 months out of the year. We adjusted our program to 10 months to compete with the Board of Education for attracting Type 04 certified teachers.*

*Staff want their summers off, which we cannot provide.*

*We're trying to recruit by offering paid vacations to full-time staff.*

While a few school district directors reported difficulties in recruiting teachers with Type 04 Certification, most indicated few or no problems with recruitment and retention:

*We have no problems recruiting or retaining teachers because our pay is much higher than non-school Pre-K programs.*

*We have not had problems—we have great retention.*

*Staffing is not a problem—it has always been easy. [I] thought a position was opening and I received over 100 calls.*

*I have not had to hire a Pre-K staff person for years.*

School district Pre-K directors indicated that when they had problems recruiting and retaining staff, it was assistant teachers who proved the most difficult to find and keep. As noted above in the discussion of compensation, the average highest-level wages for assistant teachers did not differ by auspice or by assistant teachers' education level, suggesting that there were few economic rewards for assistant teachers who remained in this position or obtained more education. Several noted that it was difficult to retain assistant teachers because assistants continually pursued more education in order to qualify for better-paying teacher positions. One commented:

*Even the highest-paid assistants don't get enough money. Low salaries lead to assistants leaving the position or completing the education necessary to become teachers.*

Others commented that assistant teachers with education, such as the associate degree required by one program, were more difficult to find than those without education.

When asked whether any state or local policies had a particular effect on their programs, privately-operated program directors reiterated their concerns about the Type 04 Certification, whereas school district directors identified the new educational requirements as a positive trend for their programs and for the early childhood teaching profession in general. Privately-operated program directors were more likely to mention as promising initiatives the State of Illinois' Great START stipend program, which rewards teachers for their educational attainment, as well as the TEACH scholarship program.

Table 9: Barriers to Recruiting and Retaining Staff: Responses from All Directors

| | |
|---|---|
| Low wages | 68% of privately-operated program directors; 10% of school district program directors[33] |
| Lack of or inadequate benefits | 23% of privately-operated program based directors; no school district program directors[34] |
| Inadequate supply of staff who meet educational qualifications | 36% of privately-operated program directors; 10% of school district program directors[35] |
| Competition from kindergarten and other elementary school employers | 50% of privately-operated program directors; 5% of school district program directors[36] |

## Summary

This profile of Chicago's Pre-K programs reveals major discrepancies in staff characteristics, compensation and turnover between programs operated in the public schools and those in privately-operated centers. Privately-operated programs were more likely to offer full-day and full-year care to three-to-five-year-olds, and thus to meet low-income working families' needs for more hours of care. But they appeared to lack the resources to compensate their staff adequately, in accordance with the advanced educational and professional levels required of them. Lower educational attainment and very high turnover among privately-operated program teaching staff, both of which undermine the quality of early care and education programs, were two notable consequences of low wages and poor benefits.

Judging from the diversity of their funding base, privately-operated programs appeared to have explored a variety of avenues to support their Pre-K programs, and yet remained unable to compete with better-funded school districts. Held to the same educational requirements for teachers, yet lacking the resources to reward educational attainment, community-based directors understandably voiced high levels of frustration. The high rate of director turnover within privately-operated programs suggests that the difficulties of managing these programs may have fueled administrator as well as teacher turnover.

School district programs enjoyed the many benefits of adequate compensation for staff: they attracted highly-educated teachers and directors and experienced lower rates of turnover. School district Pre-K teaching staff, who worked fewer hours and for a shorter year than privately-operated program staff, had more opportunities to pursue the ongoing educational requirements for Pre-K teachers that were recently instituted in Illinois. Directors' views about staffing school district Pre-K programs reflected a confidence in and high level of satisfaction with their ability to recruit and retain teachers, which no doubt contributed to their own commitment to their programs and the programs' stability. We found that some school district programs experienced challenges in recruiting and retaining well-educated assistant teachers because of a limited compensation package.

These inequities in the provision of Pre-K services in Chicago are troubling in terms of their conse-



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quences for the child care professionals who staff the privately-operated programs, and most profoundly, for the vulnerable children and families who rely on these services.

## Endnotes

1 The term "programs" refers to the administrative bodies that oversee one or more individual Pre-K sites. "Sites" are geographically distinct entities that alone constitute a "single-site program," or, if affiliated with additional sites and jointly administered, comprise a "multiple-site program."

2 The Chicago pre-K population was comprised of 22 percent (N=88) subcontracted privately-operated programs and 78 percent (N=309) school district sites. (Personal communication, Velma Thomas, Chicago Public Schools, Office of Language, Cultural and Early Childhood Education.) The number of community-based programs operating outside of the City of Chicago is estimated to be no more than 10 percent. (Personal communication, Kay Henderson, Division of Early Childhood Education, Illinois State Board of Education.)

3 Pre-K sites in Champaign/Urbana, Madison, Marion, and Peoria Counties were sampled to explore the differences between school district programs outside and within the City of Chicago. Analyses revealed that the school district sites outside of Chicago did differ significantly from Chicago school district sites with respect to staff wages, perhaps reflecting salary schedules indexed to cost-of-living differences. Responses from Pre-K programs operated outside of Chicago were not included in the results of the Chicago study described here.

4 In this Chicago study, each site was studied individually as a single-site program. More information about study design and methodology can be found in the Appendix.

5 Schulman, Blank & Ewen, 1999.

6 Significant at $p<.05$.

7 $p<.001$.

8 $p<.001$.

9 $p<.001$.

10 $p<.001$.

11 $p<.001$.

12 $p<.01$.

13 $p<.001$.

14 $p<.001$.

15 $p<.001$.

16 $p<.001$.

17 $p<.01$.

18 Teachers and assistant teachers employed by community-based programs were more likely to be age 29 or younger than those employed by school districts ($p<.05$ and $p<.001$ respectively). Assistant teachers employed by school districts were more likely to be age 50 or older than those employed by community-based programs ($p<.05$).

19 This practice was described in an interview conducted March 5, 2002, with a City of Chicago prekindergarten administrator.

20 Teachers employed by school district programs were more likely to have completed a bachelor's degree than those employed by community-based programs ($p<.001$).

21 U.S. Department of Labor, 2000.

22 Teachers employed by school district programs earned average lowest and highest salaries greater than those employed by privately-operated programs ($p<.001$).

23 Teachers, assistant teachers and directors in the full sample with higher levels of education were more likely to receive higher starting-level and highest-level hourly wages ($p<.05$). The exception to this was that assistant teachers with higher levels of education did not earn significantly higher wages.

24 School districts were more likely to contribute to teacher pension plans than were privately-operated programs ($p<.01$).

25 School district teachers were more likely to be offered a paid pension plan than those employed by community-based programs ($p<.01$).

26 School district teachers and/or assistant teachers were more likely to be unionized than those employed by community-based programs ($p<.001$).

27 $p<.05$.

28 Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995.

29 $p<.05$.

30 Centers that paid higher upper-tier salaries to teachers, assistant teachers and directors had lower rates of turnover for each position ($p<.05$). In the case of these analyses regarding turnover and wage, we sought to confirm our hypothesis that higher-level wages at both the entry and upper levels depressed child care center turnover rates. An ample research literature attests to the association between lower turnover and higher wage levels.

31 The figure demonstrates the effect of teacher wages on program-level teacher turnover. Programs that paid higher-level salaries to teachers experienced significantly less turnover than those which paid less ($p<.05$). The relationship between turnover and lower-tier salaries was not significant.

32 The figure demonstrates the effect of assistant teacher wages on program-level assistant teacher turnover. Programs that paid higher-level salaries to assistant teachers experienced significantly less turnover than those which paid less ($p<.05$). The relationship between turnover and lower-tier

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salaries was not significant.

33 Privately-operated program directors were more likely to cite low wages as a barrier to their programs than were school district directors ($p<.01$).

34 Privately-operated program directors were more likely to cite inadequate benefits as a barrier to their programs than were school district directors ($p<.01$).

35 Privately-operated program directors were more likely to cite the shortage of qualified staff as a barrier to their programs than were school district directors ($p<.05$).

36 Privately-operated program directors were more likely to cite competition from kindergarten or other elementary school employers as a barrier to their programs than were school district directors ($p<.01$).

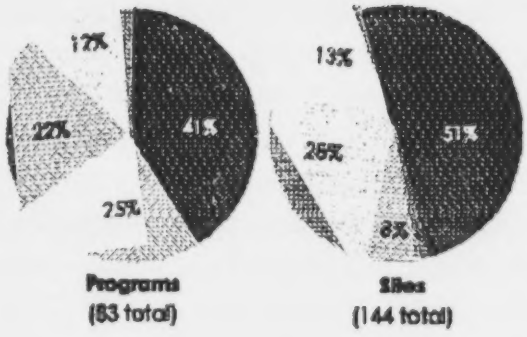
# New York State Universal Prekindergarten and Experimental Prekindergarten Programs

New York operates two state-funded prekindergarten programs, Experimental Pre-K (EPK) and Universal Pre-K (UPK), both designed to provide preschool educational services to four-year-olds, but each with its own target population and goals. EPK began in 1966 as a small program to address the educational needs of children living in poverty, and has grown to serve approximately 19,500 children since that time; it is operated exclusively by public schools throughout New York State. UPK, begun in 1998, is a larger "universal" program that aims to provide educational experiences to all four-year-olds in the state, regardless of family income. Although it is not yet universally available throughout the state, UPK served approximately 53,000 children in participating school districts during the 2001-2002 school year.

The New York State Education Department's Children, Family and Community Services Team, which administers both of these prekindergarten programs, reports that approximately one-half of UPK programs are housed in public schools; the remainder are housed in faith-based programs, independent nonprofits, independent for-profits, or for-profit chains, all of which are eligible to contract with school districts to provide UPK services.[1] All EPK programs are operated by public school districts.

Our study sample of 83 programs and 144 sites[2] included Experimental Prekindergartens (EPKs); publicly-operated Universal Prekindergartens (UPKs), primarily housed in public schools but, in two cases, in universities or colleges; independent nonprofit UPKs; faith-based nonprofit UPKs; and independent for-profit UPKs. No for-profit chains were included in the sample. For the purposes of data analysis, we combined these into four categories: EPK, public UPK, community-based nonprofit UPK and for-profit UPK. (See Figure 1.)

**Figure 1: Sample of New York Pre-K Programs**




- **Experimental Pre-K**
  *Includes:*
  - school districts
- **Publicly-Operated Universal Pre-K**
  *Includes:*
  - school districts
  - university and college-based programs
- **Community-Based Nonprofit Universal Pre-K**
  *Includes:*
  - independent nonprofits
  - faith-based nonprofits
- **For-Profit Universal Pre-K**
  *Includes:*
  - independent for-profits



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## Prekindergarten Program Characteristics

While EPKs and UPKs are primarily supported by state funds, individual school districts must also provide local matching dollars to become eligible for state funds to administer these programs. State dollars constituted the primary funding source for Pre-K programs in the sample, regardless of auspice, but EPKs received a higher percentage of their funds from school districts (15 percent, on average) than UPKs of any type. Community-based nonprofit UPKs received a larger share of their funding from public contracts other than state prekindergarten and school district sources (18 percent) than did all other programs.

Privately-operated UPK programs were much more likely than EPKs or public UPKs to serve infants and toddlers in addition to preschool-age children. All for-profits (100 percent) and 86 percent of the community-based nonprofit UPK programs cared for infants and toddlers, compared with no EPKs or public UPKs.[3]

State-funded prekindergarten services in New York, whether offered by EPKs, public UPKs or privately-operated UPKs, were primarily part-day programs (71 percent). The majority of Pre-K programs offered half-day sessions each day to two distinct groups of children. Only one-fifth of programs offered a full-day Pre-K session, with community-based nonprofit UPKs most likely and for-profit UPKs least likely to do so.[4] (See Table 1.) Most programs (85 percent) provided prekindergarten during a 9- to 10- month year.

More than one-half of programs (57 percent) offered a separate summer session for preschoolers or other children. Of these, more than half (58 percent) reported that they employed prekindergarten teachers or assistant teachers in the summer program, separately from the prekindergarten school year, a practice that did not differ by auspice.

Teaching staff were employed, on average, for 31 to 32 hours per week and 10 to 11 months per year. Teachers employed by public UPKs worked an average of 28 hours per week, significantly less than those employed by other program types.[5] (See Table 2.) Directors, whose schedules did not differ by the auspice of their employer, worked an average of 38 hours per week and 11 months per year.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Surveyed Programs**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Auspice** | **Experimental Prekindergarten (EPK)** is offered exclusively through public school districts. **Universal Prekindergarten (UPK)** is offered through community-based nonprofits and for-profits as well as public school districts, universities, and colleges. |
| **Ages of Children Served** | 3-5 years |
| **Daily Schedule** | Two half-day sessions per day, serving two distinct groups of children. |
| **Annual Schedule** | 9-10 month school district calendar. A separate summer program was offered by 57% of all programs. |
| **Sources of Funding** | 84% of funding was from state prekindergarten contracts for all programs. EPKs were more likely than other programs to augment state support with school district funds.[6] Community-based nonprofit UPKs were more likely than other programs to augment state funds with other public subsidies and with private donations.[7] |
| **Number of Pre-K Staff* Employed Per Site** | 4 teachers, 4 assistant teachers and 1 on-site director |

* Others not involved in direct caregiving for preschool children, such as clerical or administrative staff, were not included in these results, nor were teaching staff who care for infants, toddlers or school-age children in programs that house New York Universal Prekindergarten programs.



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Table 2: Average Work Schedule by Position (Hours per Week)

| | EPK | Public UPK | Community-Based Nonprofit UPK | For-profit UPK | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers[8] | 34 | 28 | 34 | 33 | 32 |
| Assistant Teachers | 32 | 28 | 31 | 33 | 31 |

## Demographic Characteristics of Teaching Staff

Pre-K teaching staff in New York, like other members of the U.S. child care workforce, were predominantly female. Most teachers and assistant teachers were 30 to 49 years of age, a departure from other studies' findings that assistant teachers are typically younger as a group than teachers.[9] For-profit UPKs were more likely to employ assistant teachers between the ages of 20 and 29 than were EPKs, whose assistants tended to be older; approximately one-half (52 percent) of assistant teachers employed by EPKs were between the ages of 40 and 59.[10]

Some ethnic diversity was evident among teachers and assistant teachers, although somewhat less than is found nationally. Assistant teachers were more likely to be women of color (24 percent) than were teachers overall (12 percent),[11] with the disparity most evident in EPKs, where 27 percent of assistant teachers and 13 percent of teachers were women of color.[12] The ethnicity of teachers and assistant teachers was more similar in community-based nonprofit UPKs and in for-profit UPKs.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Teaching Staff

| | Teachers | Assistant Teachers |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | 97% female | 98% female |
| Age | 63% between 30-49 years | 67% between 30-49 years |
| Ethnicity | 84% European American<br>9% African American<br>5% Latino<br>1% Asian American<br>1% Other | 68% European American<br>18% African American<br>11% Latino<br>2% Asian American<br>1% Other |

## Educational Background of Prekindergarten Staff

Teaching staff employed by New York prekindergarten programs of all types must meet pre-service educational requirements that are more stringent than those in community child care programs that do not offer state-funded prekindergarten.[13] New prekindergarten teachers are required, at minimum, to have completed a bachelor's degree in Education and to hold a New York State Teaching Certificate for nursery school through sixth grade. To qualify for permanent certification, Pre-K teachers must complete a master's degree in Education after five years of teaching, a standard equivalent to that required of teachers in grades K-12. These requirements, which have been in effect for public school EPKs and UPKs since the programs' inception, were scheduled to go into effect in September 2001 for privately-operated UPKs. At the request of privately-operated UPKs, however, the New York Legislature extended the implementation of these guidelines



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until September 2002. As a consequence, any New York prekindergarten program employing teachers without a bachelor's degree and certification will soon be out of compliance with the new educational requirements, which could lead to the loss of its prekindergarten contract and the state funding that accompanies it.

In addition to a high school diploma or equivalent, Pre-K assistant teachers must have completed six semester hours in Elementary Education, which may include Early Childhood Education or a related field, a higher standard than is required for community child care programs. Although there are no specific requirements for Pre-K program site directors, they must meet the minimum requirements established for New York child care programs, described in Table 4.

Teachers and directors employed by New York prekindergarten programs have attained a high level of education, comparable to that of K-12 teachers. Approximately three-quarters (72 percent) of Pre-K teachers in our sample had completed a master's degree or more as their highest level of education, and only four percent had completed less than a bachelor's degree and certification. Directors' education levels were comparable to teachers', with 75 percent having completed a master's degree or more. Most assistant teachers had completed some college-level work in early childhood education, although a substantial number (29 percent) had not.

Differences in educational attainment were dramatic between teachers employed by EPKs and publicly-operated UPKs and those in privately-operated UPKs. Teachers and directors in EPKs and public UPKs were more likely to have completed a master's degree or above than their counterparts in community-based nonprofit and for-profit UPKs. Since a master's degree is required of teachers after five years of teaching in order to achieve a permanent Pre-K credential, this degree signals that its holder has made a substantial investment in a Pre-K teaching career. As a result, programs employing master's-level teachers may achieve a measure of staff stability, tenure and expertise. Thus far, however, although New York's ambitious educational requirements for prekindergarten teachers have resulted in a well-educated cohort of teachers overall, they have been more fully realized in the publicly-funded programs. [14] Assistant teachers' education did not vary significantly by the auspice of their programs.

**Table 4: Minimum Educational Requirements for New York Prekindergarten Staff**

| Assistant Teachers* | Teachers | On-site Directors (Called Site Supervisor) |
|---|---|---|
| High School Diploma or its equivalent, and six semester hours in Elementary Education or related field | Bachelor's degree in Education and Certification for first five years; Master's degree in Education required after five years | Associate degree in Early Childhood Education, two years teaching experience, and two years staff supervisory experience |

Source: New York State Education Department, Children, Family, and Community Services Team.

* Aides, who are defined by the New York State Education Department as providing custodial care for young children and are supervised by assistant teachers and teachers, need not meet any pre-service educational requirements.

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| Table 5: Educational Attainments of Prekindergarten Staff | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Teachers** | **Assistant Teachers** | **Directors** |
| **Master's degree and above** | 72% | 1% | 75% |
| **Bachelor's degree plus credential** | 20% | 1% | 13% |
| **Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE)** | 4% | 3% | 4% |
| **Bachelor's degree (not in ECE)** | 2% | 3% | 6% |
| **Associate degree in ECE** | 2% | 11% | 0% |
| **Some college-level work in ECE, less than associate degree** | 0% | 52% | 2% |
| **No college-level ECE** | 0% | 29% | 0% |

| Table 6: Educational Characteristics of Staff, by Auspice | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Teachers with a bachelor's degree and above**[15] | **Teachers with a master's degree and above**[16] | **Assistant teachers with an associate degree and above** | **Directors with a master's degree and above**[17] |
| **EPK** | 100% | 77% | 21% | 92% |
| **Public UPK** | 100% | 72% | 34% | 100% |
| **Community-Based Nonprofit UPK** | 89% | 38% | 28% | 57% |
| **For-Profit UPK** | 100% | 38% | 42% | 67% |
| **Total** | 98% | 64% | 28% | 77% |

## Compensation

Prekindergarten teachers' earnings varied significantly, depending on the auspice of the program in which they worked. Teacher compensation at privately-operated UPKs was significantly lower than that offered by EPKs and public UPKs; teachers at EPKs, for example, earned nearly twice as much at the highest level as those employed by for-profit UPKs.[18] Teachers employed by EPKs earned annual salaries between $33,953 and $59,232, and those employed by public UPKs earned salaries between $30,986 and $52,942. These salaries approached those offered to New York kindergarten teachers, which are among the highest in the U.S., at an average of $58,490 per year.[19]

By contrast, teachers at privately-operated UPKs were more likely to receive salaries comparable to those offered in community-based child care programs, ranging from $15,733 to $19,775.[20] Teachers at for-profit UPKs, which paid the least, earned average salaries between $19,208 and $20,497. (See Table 7.)

Even for teachers with equivalent educational backgrounds, the differences in wages between

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the publicly- and privately-operated prekindergarten programs were dramatic. Starting-level teachers with a bachelor's degree plus certification earned $19.91 per hour, on average, in a public UPK, compared with $12.32 per hour in a for-profit UPK. Upper-tier wages for teachers with a bachelor's degree and certification differed even more noticeably by auspice, with EPKs offering a mean hourly wage of $39.68, compared with $13.99 at community-based nonprofits.[21] (See Table 8.) Starting and upper-level mean wages for master's level teachers were also higher in publicly-operated prekindergartens than in privately-operated programs.[22]

By contrast, assistant teachers' and directors' wages did not vary as sharply by program auspice. As in the other states examined in this study, assistant teachers' wages were comparable across all program types, at an average range from $8.38 to $10.30.

Approximately one-third (29 percent) of teachers employed by public UPKs were employed part-time (less than 30 hours per week); for these teachers, annual salaries fell between $15,426 and $16,964. Although full-time salaries were comparable between public UPK teachers and EPK teachers, part-time public UPK salaries were significantly lower, with part-time EPK teachers' salaries ranging from $19,500 to $20,833.

For the sample as a whole, most teachers' salaries increased as they obtained more education. Teachers who had completed a master's degree or above, for example, earned $18.92 as an average lowest wage, while with those with a bachelor's degree and a credential earned an average lowest wage of $15.78. Assistant teachers' and directors' compensation, however, was not correlated with their educational attainment.

Teacher and assistant teacher wages also did not differ significantly between the nine- to ten-month school year and the summer, for those prekindergarten sites that operated year-round.

Table 7: Mean Starting and Highest Wages, by Auspice

| | | Teachers | Assistant Teachers | Directors |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EPK | Low | $19.46 | $ 8.52 | $29.71 |
| | High | $32.98 | $11.20 | $33.32 |
| Public UPK | Low | $19.13 | $ 8.83 | $22.41 |
| | High | $29.87 | $ 9.96 | $28.54 |
| Community-Based Nonprofit UPK | Low | $13.76 | $ 8.31 | $19.71 |
| | High | $16.51 | $10.44 | $22.97 |
| For-Profit UPK | Low | $12.91 | $ 7.31 | $17.75 |
| | High | $14.02 | $ 8.43 | $19.00 |
| Total | Low | $17.21 | $ 8.38 | $22.08 |
| | High | $25.84 | $10.30 | $26.15 |

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| Table 8: Mean Starting and Highest Wages of Teachers with Bachelor's Degrees and Certification, by Auspice | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Starting or Lowest Wage** | **Highest Hourly Wage** |
| **EPK** | $19.68 | $39.68 |
| **Public UPK** | $19.91 | $26.27 |
| **Community-Based Nonprofit UPK** | $12.85 | $13.99 |
| **For-Profit UPK** | $12.32 | $12.65 |

| Table 9: Mean Starting and Highest Wages of Teachers (Hourly and Annual), by Education | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Starting or Lowest Wage** | **Highest Wage** |
| **Master's degree and above** | $18.92<br>$31,119 | $28.48<br>$38,334 |
| **Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) plus credential** | $15.78<br>$26,800 | $21.57<br>$39,600 |
| **Bachelor's degree in ECE** | $16.55<br>$31,000 | $21.39<br>$32,500 |
| **Associate degree in ECE** | $11.67<br>$18,900 | $11.08<br>$18,900 |

* Hourly figures are mean wages for all teachers in the sample. Annual figures are mean salaries for all teachers employed 35 hours or more per week.

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## Employee Benefit Plans

For-profit UPKs were less likely to offer health insurance to teachers than were all other program types, and less likely than EPKs and community-based nonprofit UPKs to offer health insurance to assistant teachers. Of those programs that provided health insurance, EPKs were most likely to offer fully-paid insurance to full-time teachers (68 percent) and assistant teachers (53 percent), followed in descending order by public UPKs, community-based nonprofit UPKs, and for-profit UPKs. EPKs and public UPKs were much more likely to contribute to teacher retirement plans than were for-profit UPKs. (See Table 10.)

| Table 10: Benefits | |
|---|---|
| **Health Benefits** | 86% of programs offered health insurance to teachers, and 74% offered health insurance to assistant teachers. For-profit UPKs were less likely to offer health insurance to teachers or assistant teachers (44%) than were other programs.[23] |
| **Level of Health Coverage** | 43% of programs offered fully-paid coverage to teachers, and 34% offered fully-paid coverage to assistant teachers. EPKs (68%) and public UPKs (50%) were most likely to offer fully-paid coverage to teachers.[24] |
| **Pension Plan** | 91% of EPKs and 90% of public UPKs regularly contributed to a pension plan for teachers, compared with 11% of for-profits.[25] |

## Unionization

Nearly all EPK programs (97 percent) and most public UPK programs (70 percent) employed teachers and/or assistant teachers who were represented in collective bargaining agreements by a union, compared with 10 percent of for-profit UPKs and 11 percent of community-based nonprofit UPKs.[26]

## Turnover

Teacher turnover in New York's Pre-K programs, at an annual rate of 11 percent, was considerably lower than the roughly 30-percent turnover found in national studies of child care programs.[27] Teacher and assistant teacher turnover was generally low in all program types, with the exception of 46-percent assistant teacher turnover in for-profit UPKs. (See Figure 2.) Salaries and benefits provide important clues to this relatively low turnover in New York's prekindergartens. Programs employing assistant teachers at lower starting wages had higher turnover than those paying higher starting wages.[28] (See Figure 2.) Although turnover among teachers was not as strongly related to wage levels, it was higher in programs that offered less health insurance coverage.[29] Director turnover, at an overall average of eight percent, was higher in



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programs that offered lower starting wages.[30]

Ten percent of all programs reported employing a long-term substitute to fill a vacancy for which they had been unable to employ a permanent staff member. While comments by directors of EPK and public UPK programs suggested that turnover was not an urgent worry, some of these directors expressed concern:

*We have not had any turnover, but I believe if we did it would be difficult to recruit now.*

Directors of privately-operated UPKs voiced the most difficulty in recruiting and retaining teaching staff, which they largely attributed to their low compensation packages:

*School districts have more openings available. With their higher salaries and benefits, we can't compete.*

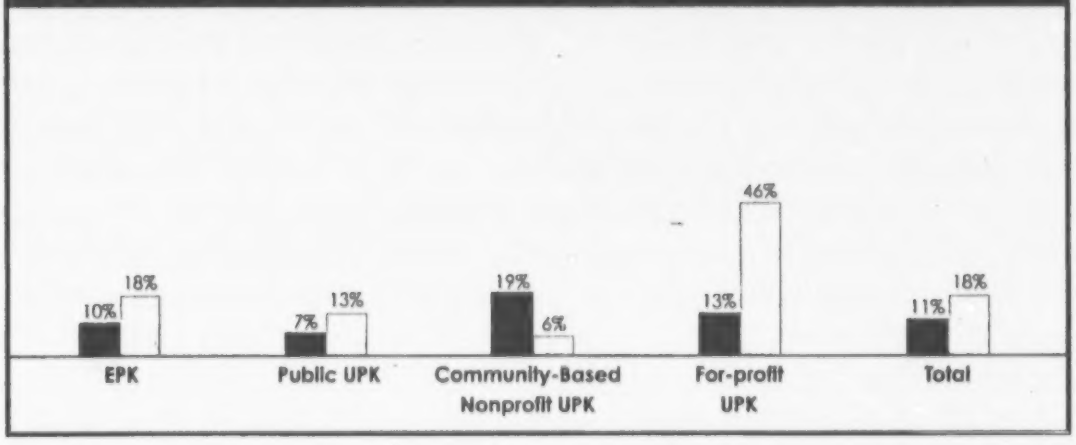
*Money is the biggest issue. Staff and applicants can make more money working at fast food drive-throughs like Burger King.*

*It's always a problem keeping up with the Board of Education's salaries and benefits. Teachers without licensing come here to get training, and once they have a license, they dump us for the school district. The supply on Staten Island for teachers is worse. We are a learning institution.*

A director of an EPK program commented:

*Our EPK program, all in school district classrooms, has no problems recruiting and retaining staff. Our UPK program, which contracts out to Head Start, has low wages and problems in these areas. Although schools help out, the low wages largely contribute to 85 percent turnover for UPK sites.*

Figure 2: Annual Turnover, by Program Site



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## Directors' Views on Recruiting and Retaining Staff

As expected, directors of for-profit and community-based nonprofit UPKs identified more barriers to recruitment and retention than EPK directors, who were able to provide better compensation packages to teaching staff. But surprisingly, public UPK directors, whose compensation package and staff qualifications were comparable to EPKs, were as likely as private UPK directors to identify low staff wages and competition with public school employers as barriers to recruitment and retention. The relatively high percentage of teachers (29 percent) employed part-time by public UPK programs may, in part, explain directors' perceptions of low wages as a problem for their programs. (See Table 11.)

Although it was not possible to identify conclusively why public UPK programs in this sample perceived low wages and competition with other schools as problems to the same extent as privately-operated UPKs, the comments of public UPK directors offered clues to the challenges facing their programs. Public UPK directors, who play a role in supporting contracted private UPK sites, may have been, in part, voicing a concern for private UPKs, which they view as disadvantaged in efforts to recruit and retain staff. One director of a public UPK commented in this vein:

*Finding certified teachers is a challenge. We haven't had high turnover in the public schools, but the community-based sites lose teachers to public schools, and to better pay on Long Island.*[33]

Another theme that emerged in public UPK directors' comments concerned the negative influence of unstable state funding on their programs. One director's comment was representative of several:

*The late and uncertain budget from the [State] Legislature makes it impossible to know if we are going to get funding from year to year. We cannot make plans until very late.*

Privately-operated UPKs also commented on unstable funding:

*Since 9/11, financial issues have caused problems. The funds diverted to deal with the tragedy are having a trickle-down effect. We are not sure if the state will continue to fund UPK in the future. We have a wonderful program, and it will be very difficult for our parents if lack of funding causes our program to end.*

*The state budget process doesn't let us know from year to year if we'll be funded or how much we'll get. We haven't gotten increases, even as expenses increase.*

With unstable funding, staff recruitment and retention may become more challenging for public UPK directors even when their programs are able to provide compensation on a par with EPK.

EPK directors did not voice the same concern as UPK directors about the future of their programs, but several did note the negative effect of receiving no cost-of-living increases. Several also reported that they would like to expand their programs to a full day in order to better meet families' needs. In addition, one noted some staffing conflicts between Pre-K and grades K-6, suggesting that public school sponsorship can present its own challenges to recruitment and retention:

*Principals will move teachers around from Pre-K to other grades. Principals do not value Pre-K like K-6, so they'll take a great Pre-K teacher out of the Pre-K classroom and replace them with someone less qualified. Our high certification and educational requirements make it more difficult to recruit qualified teaching staff when principals don't support Pre-K.*

| Table 11: Barriers to Recruiting and Retaining Staff: Responses from All Directors | |
|---|---|
| **Low wages**[34] | 20% EPKs<br>57% public UPKs<br>64% community-based nonprofit UPKs<br>67% for-profit UPKs |
| **Inadequate benefits**[35] | 5% EPKs<br>7% public UPKs<br>27% community-based nonprofit UPKs<br>33% for-profit UPKs |
| **Competition from kindergarten and other elementary school employers**[36] | 0% EPKs<br>64% public UPKs<br>64% community-based nonprofit UPKs<br>33% for-profit UPKs |

## Summary

Although it is generally understood that New York's state-funded prekindergarten effort is offered through two separate systems, Experimental Prekindergarten (EPK) and Universal Prekindergarten (UPK), our findings suggest that there are also substantial differences within UPK in program characteristics, staff qualifications and compensation, depending on whether programs are publicly- or privately-operated. Publicly-operated UPKs closely resembled the more longstanding, public school-based EPKs, whereas community-based nonprofit and for-profit UPKs shared more in common with the community-based child care system that is not affiliated with New York State Prekindergartens. UPKs could be viewed in some ways as operating a two-tiered system, with private programs serving as a kind of lower-paid apprenticeship opportunity for teaching staff who, once qualified, can move on to better-compensated positions in public UPK and EPK programs. With fewer educational requirements in place for the community-based nonprofit and for-profit UPKs, this unequal relationship between privately and publicly-operated programs could continue.

Because of new teacher requirements going into effect in the fall of 2002, teachers who are currently employed in privately-operated UPKs but have not completed a bachelor's degree and certification – and after five years' employment, a master's degree – will no longer be able to teach in any state-funded prekindergarten program. One consequence of this policy, which standardizes educational requirements for all teachers regardless of program type, will be to place new pressure on private UPK programs that are already struggling to maintain a stable group of qualified teachers and assistant teachers. It seems unlikely that private programs, which pay as little as one-half the salaries offered by their public school-based counterparts, will be successful in recruiting and retaining master's-level teachers unless they receive additional financial support to improve their compensation package.

Although they shared many characteristics, public UPKs and EPKs also diverged in some notable respects. EPKs drew on a greater percentage of school district funding than did public UPKs, and were more likely to employ unionized staff. UPKs tended to hire more part-time teachers, which influenced the level of teachers' annual compensation and, potentially, their benefits.[37] Directors of publicly-operated UPK programs had a somewhat more negative assessment than EPK directors of their prospects for recruitment and retention, which may have been a result of these differences in their programs as well as future funding prospects for UPK.



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## Endnotes

1 Schulman, Blank & Ewen, 1999.

2 The term "programs" refers to administrative bodies that oversee one or more individual Pre-K sites. "Sites" are geographically distinct entities that alone constitute a "single-site program" or, if affiliated with additional sites and jointly administered, comprise a "multi-site program."

3 EPKs were less likely than community-based nonprofits and for-profits to serve infants and toddlers ($p<.001$). UPKs were less likely than community-based nonprofits and for-profits to serve infants and toddlers ($p<.01$).

4 One third of community-based nonprofits offered full-day Pre-K, compared with no for-profits ($p<.05$).

5 $p<.05$.

6 EPKs received a larger percentage of their total prekindergarten funding from school district funds than did publicly-operated UPKs, community-based nonprofit UPKs, and for-profit UPKs ($p<.05$).

7 Community-based nonprofit UPKs received a higher percentage of their total prekindergarten funding from public subsidies (other than state prekindergarten dollars and school district funds) than EPKs, publicly-operated UPKs, and for-profit UPKs ($p<.05$). Community-based nonprofit UPKs received a higher percentage of their total prekindergarten funding from private donations or gifts than did EPKs or publicly-operated UPKs ($p<.05$).

8 Teachers employed by UPK programs worked an average of 28 hours per week – fewer hours than teachers in EPKs, community-based nonprofit UPKs, and for-profit UPKs ($p<.05$).

9 Whitebook et al., 1990. The most recent national survey of child care teaching staff, the Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study (1995), reported a mean age of 34 for all teaching staff, including teachers and assistant teachers. Several studies of child care centers conducted at the state and local level have found that assistant teachers were younger than teachers. For example, Center for the Child Care Workforce (1998) reported that 51 percent of assistant teachers were younger than 30, while 54 percent of teachers were between the ages of 30 and 50.

10 $p<.05$.

11 $p<.001$.

12 $p<.01$.

13 New York Office of Children and Family Services (2000).

14 No program, with the exception of a small number of those operated by community-based nonprofit UPKs, employed teachers who had completed less education than a bachelor's degree.

15 Community-based nonprofits were less likely to employ teachers with a bachelor's degree and above than were publicly-operated UPKs and EPKs ($p<.05$).

16 Teachers employed by EPKs and publicly-operated UPKs were more likely to have completed a master's degree or higher than those employed by a community-based nonprofit or for-profit UPKs ($p<.05$).

17 Directors employed by EPKs and public UPKs were more likely to have completed a master's degree or above than those employed by a community-based nonprofit UPK ($p<.05$).

18 Teachers employed by EPKs and UPKs earned higher starting and highest wages than those employed by for-profit or community-based nonprofit UPKs ($p<.05$).

19 U.S. Department of Labor, 2000.

20 U.S. Department of Labor, 2000.

21 EPKs and public UPKs paid higher starting-level and upper-level wages to teachers with bachelor's degrees and certification than did community-based nonprofit UPKs or for-profit UPKs ($p<.05$).

22 EPKs and public UPKs paid higher starting-level and upper-level wages to teachers with master's degrees than did community-based nonprofit UPKs or for-profit UPKs ($p<.05$).

23 For-profit UPKs were less likely to offer health insurance to teachers than were EPKs ($p<.001$), publicly-operated UPKs ($p<.01$) or community-based nonprofit UPKs ($p<.05$). For-profits were less likely to offer health insurance to assistant teachers than were EPKs ($p<.01$) or community-based nonprofit UPKs ($p<.05$).

24 EPKs and publicly-operated UPKs were more likely to offer fully-paid coverage to teachers than were community-based nonprofit or for-profit UPKs ($p<.05$).

25 EPKs and publicly-operated UPKs were more likely to contribute to teacher pension plans than were for-profit UPKs ($p<.001$).

26 EPKs were more likely to employ teachers and/or assistant teachers represented by unions than publicly-operated UPKs ($p<.01$), community-based nonprofit UPKs ($p<.001$), or for-profit UPKs ($p<.001$). Among UPKs, publicly-operated programs were more likely to employ teachers and/or assistant teachers represented by unions than community-based nonprofits or for-profits ($p<.01$).

27 Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990, 1997; Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995.

28 $p<.05$.

29 $p<.05$.

30 $p<.05$.



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[31] For-profit UPKs had significantly more assistant teacher turnover than did community-based nonprofit UPKs ($p<.05$).

[32] Assistant teacher turnover was higher in programs paying lower starting wages ($p<.05$).

[33] A compensation initiative in place in Long Island may be increasing wage levels in this area.

[34] EPK directors were less likely than all other programs to report low wages as a challenge ($p<.05$).

[35] EPK directors were less likely than for-profits to report inadequate benefits as a challenge ($p<.05$).

[36] EPK directors were less likely to report competition with other employers as a challenge than were directors of publicly-operated UPKs ($p<.001$), community-based nonprofit UPKs ($p<.001$) or for-profit UPKs ($p<.01$).

[37] Directors were asked about the benefits their programs offered to *full-time* teaching staff only. Research on benefit levels of part-time child care employees suggests that, like part-time workers in other industries, they are less likely to receive health coverage than full-time employees (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990, 1997).

# Texas Public School Prekindergarten Program

The Texas Public School Prekindergarten Program is the second largest state Pre-K effort in the United States, both in the number of children served and in annual expenditures. It was developed to serve children who are educationally disadvantaged because of low income, homelessness or limited English proficiency. Every Texas school district must offer a Pre-K program if it has at least 15 four-year-old children meeting one or more of these criteria. Children who do not meet these criteria are eligible to attend Pre-K programs if the school district determines that all other educationally disadvantaged children are being served. Similarly, school districts may extend their programs to serve qualifying three-year-old children if they have met their obligations to four-year-olds. In 2000-2001, the program served 148,888 children, or 73 percent of those eligible, at a yearly cost of $267 million (Education Week, 2002).

State-funded prekindergartens in Texas are operated almost exclusively by public schools. A small number of programs are reportedly contracted to community-based nonprofit agencies by public school districts,[1] but no contracted sites were represented in this study sample. While we were unable to collect a large, representative sample of programs in Texas, there is little variation in how the programs are financed or administered, and as a result, the 37 programs in the sample (operating at 37 sites) reveal reliable findings about program characteristics and staffing. While there are limits to our ability to generalize from these findings to the statewide program, the results offer an informative case study of a program that is administered almost entirely through the public schools. Programs from Bexar, Dallas, Jefferson, Lubbock and Tyler Counties were included in the final sample; they were selected to provide an urban, rural and suburban mix of communities.[2]

## Prekindergarten Program Characteristics

Begun in 1985 as a public school prekindergarten effort to prepare children for school, the Texas program has remained largely unchanged in its operation and goals since that time, even while it grew an estimated 30 percent in the 1990s.[3] State prekindergarten funds serve as the primary funding source, but school districts can augment these with local revenues. By adding local revenues to state funds, school districts can improve the funding base for prekindergarten programs in their community, theoretically enhancing their ability to improve compensation and benefits. Programs were asked about the extent to which their prekindergarten program funding was supported by state dollars or by an array of other funding sources. State funds were the primary source of revenue for this sample of programs, with 76 percent of funding from state Pre-K dollars, 11 percent from school district funds, 4 percent from a public contract not with the state Pre-K program or public school district, and 8 percent from other, unspecified sources. Parent fees and corporate funds (at 1 percent) played a negligible role in funding these programs.

Approximately two-thirds (65 percent) of Texas prekindergartens offered two half-day sessions per day for children, with the remainder (35 percent) offering full-day services for one group of children; i.e., half-day prekindergarten supplemented by at least five hours of "wrap-around" care. No programs in our sample offered only a part-day prekindergarten class for one group of children. Teachers and assistant teachers worked an average of 38 hours per week for a nine-month year.

Prekindergarten programs operated primarily as nine-month programs in Texas. Not quite half (43 percent) of schools offering prekindergarten for the nine-month school year also offered a separate summer session for preschool or other chil-

dren. We investigated whether programs employed prekindergarten staff in the summer session, in order to learn whether teaching staff combined different jobs with the same employer over the course of the year. Approximately one-half of these summer programs (47 percent) employed prekindergarten teachers and/or assistant teachers regularly employed during the nine-month year.

We were also interested in the extent to which teaching staff were employed in positions before or after the regular prekindergarten day in their schools. One-third of programs (32 percent) provided care in the morning or afternoon, before or after their regular session to preschoolers enrolled in the Prekindergarten Program. Full-day programs were as likely as those offering two part-day sessions to offer this "wrap-around" care. Half of the schools in the sample (53 percent) provided wrap-around care to children other than preschool age children; probably, this was largely for school-age children enrolled in their elementary school programs. Approximately one-third of programs offering wrap-around care employed at least one teacher, and 44 percent employed at least one assistant teacher to care for preschool-age children before or after the regular prekindergarten day. A smaller percentage of schools employed prekindergarten teachers or assistant teachers to staff before- or after-school programs for children of other ages.

Table 1: Characteristics of Prekindergarten Programs

| | |
|---|---|
| **Auspice** | All prekindergarten programs were operated under the auspice of public school districts (n=37). |
| **Ages of Children Served** | 100% served children ages 3 to 5. |
| **Daily Schedule** | 65% offered two half-day sessions per day serving two distinct groups of children. 35% offered full-day prekindergarten sessions. |
| **Annual Schedule** | 9-month, school district calendar. |
| **Sources of Funding** | 76% of funding was from state prekindergarten dollars. |
| **Number of Prekindergarten Staff* Employed Per Site** | 3 teachers; 3 assistant teachers.** |

* Others not involved in direct caregiving for preschool children, such as clerical or administrative staff, were not included in these results, nor were teaching staff who cared for infants, toddlers or school-age children in schools that house prekindergartens.

** Texas Pre-K programs were administered solely by school principals. No data were collected about their positions.

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## Demographic Characteristics of Teaching Staff

Prekindergarten teaching staff in Texas, like other members of the U.S. child care workforce, were overwhelmingly female. The majority of teachers and assistant teachers were between 30 and 49 years in age, which is consistent with the average age range of teachers and assistant teachers employed in community-based child care programs. The finding that assistant teachers were similar in age to teachers is a departure from national findings that assistant teachers are a younger cohort, on average, than teachers. Teachers and assistant teachers were ethnically diverse; half of teachers and 85 percent of assistant teachers were women of color.

Table 2: Characteristics of Teaching Staff

| | Teachers | Assistant Teachers |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | 100% female | 99% female |
| **Age** | 53% between 30 and 49 years | 53% between 30 and 49 years |
| **Ethnicity** | 50% European American<br>38% Latino<br>9% African American<br>3% Asian American<br>0% Other | 15% European American<br>73% Latino<br>7% African American<br>3% Asian American<br>2% Other |

## Educational Background of Prekindergarten Staff

The State of Texas has two sets of teaching staff regulations for center-based programs serving preschool-age children. Teachers and assistant teachers employed in child care centers licensed by the state of Texas need only complete a high school degree or be employed in a recognized early childhood careers program, but requirements for state prekindergarten teaching staff are substantially higher.[4]

Texas educational requirements for prekindergarten teachers are equivalent to those for teachers in grades K-12. Pre-K teachers must complete a bachelor's degree, a teaching certificate, and an Early Childhood or Kindergarten Endorsement. To obtain a teaching certificate, an applicant must have completed a bachelor's degree and teacher training in a certified program; a Kindergarten Endorsement requires satisfactory completion of a test related to working with this age group and/or early childhood education coursework. Teachers responsible for a classroom with children whose first language is not English must also obtain an English as a Second Language Endorsement. Emergency certification may be granted for one year to teachers who are working toward certification and endorsement and have submitted a written plan of study to the Texas Education Association.

The state does not require assistant teachers to meet any pre-service educational requirements, but individual school districts may establish requirements of their own. No estimates are available of the number of school districts implementing additional requirements. Elementary school principals carry out administrative duties on behalf of prekindergarten programs, which generally share facilities with elementary schools. The State of Texas does not specify a role for prekindergarten on-site directors or teacher-directors aside from principals, and thus sets no requirements for such positions.[5] Few programs are reported to employ site directors or teacher-directors, and none were found in this sample.

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Eighty-nine percent of prekindergarten teachers in our sample had completed a bachelor's degree and certification or more, and all of the remainder had completed a bachelor's degree; these teachers may have obtained Emergency Certificates. In contrast to the educational attainment of teachers, most assistant teachers (74 percent) had completed no college-level education in child development or a related field.

**Table 3: Minimum Educational Requirements for Texas Prekindergarten Staff**

| Assistant Teacher | Teacher |
|---|---|
| None | Bachelor's degree, Certification, and Early Childhood or Kindergarten Endorsement |

Source: Texas Education Agency, 2001.

**Table 4: Educational Attainment of Texas Prekindergarten Staff**

| | Teachers | Assistant Teachers |
|---|---|---|
| **Master's degree and above** | 19% | 3% |
| **Bachelor's degree plus credential** | 70% | 0% |
| **Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE)** | 0% | 0% |
| **Bachelor's degree (not in ECE)** | 10% | 0% |
| **Associate degree in ECE** | 0% | 0% |
| **Some college-level work in ECE, less than associate degree** | 1% | 23% |
| **No college-level ECE** | 0% | 74% |



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## Compensation

Our investigation sought to gauge the extent to which salaries for prekindergarten teachers resembled those of public school kindergarten teachers or of teachers in community-based child care programs. Prekindergarten teachers' mean annual salaries in this sample, ranging from $30,564 to $40,471, were comparable to Texas kindergarten teachers' average annual salary, $37,240.[6] Teaching staff in community-based child care programs earned much lower salaries, ranging from $12,058 to $16,188.[7]

Teachers who had completed a master's degree or higher were likely to earn more than those with less education. A high percentage of teachers in our sample, however, came from the large, higher-paying urban areas of Dallas and Bexar Counties, and had a bachelor's degree and no certification; this led to an anomalous finding across the entire sample that B.A.-level teachers *without* certification earned higher salaries on average than those *with* certification.[8] (See Table 6.)

Assistant teachers' earnings were modest, ranging from $8.16 to $9.40 per hour, or $12,348 to $16,309 per year; these were not found to improve significantly with increases in education.

We investigated the extent to which compensation differed for teaching staff employed in wrap-around programs before or after the prekindergarten day or in summer sessions. Most such programs paid teachers (75 percent) and assistant teachers (80 percent) a lower salary for working in wrap-around programs than for working in the prekindergarten classroom. Entry-level wages for teachers and assistant teachers in summer sessions were comparable to those they earned in nine-month prekindergarten programs, but upper-level wages in summer programs did not keep pace. These findings are somewhat tentative because of our limited sample size, but they point to the possibility that some prekindergarten staff receive different levels of compensation at different times within the same school.

Table 5: Mean Starting and Highest Hourly Wages

| | Low | High |
|---|---|---|
| **Teachers** | $15.74 | $21.08 |
| **Assistant Teachers** | $8.16 | $9.40 |

Table 6. Mean Starting and Highest Hourly and Annual Earnings* of Teachers by Education

| | Starting or Lowest Wage | Highest Hourly Wage |
|---|---|---|
| **Master's degree and above** | $16.27<br>$30,976 | $21.70<br>$42,047 |
| **Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) plus credential** | $15.77<br>$30,804 | $19.93<br>$39,356 |
| **Bachelor's degree (not in ECE)** | $17.04<br>$33,000 | $27.25<br>$52,905 |
| **Some college-level work in ECE, less than associate degree** | $12.00<br>$18,144 | $12.00<br>$18,144 |

*Annual earnings include only those teachers who were employed 35 hours a week or more.



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## Employee Benefit Plans

Virtually all Pre-K programs in this sample provided health insurance and a paid pension plan to teaching staff. Approximately half of the programs offered fully-paid health insurance, with the remainder offering partially-paid insurance.[9] We investigated whether teaching staff benefits were higher in prekindergarten programs that paid higher wages, a trend observed in community-based child care programs, but found no relationship between wage levels and benefits. (See Figure 7.)

Table 7: Benefits

| | |
|---|---|
| **Health Benefits** | 100% of programs offered health insurance to teachers and assistant teachers. |
| **Level of Health Coverage** | 49% of programs offered teachers fully-paid coverage.<br>47% of programs offered assistant teachers fully-paid coverage. |
| **Pension Plan** | 92% of programs regularly contributed to a pension plan for teachers. |

## Unionization

Unlike their counterparts in many states, Texas school district employees are not unionized at the prekindergarten or K-12 level.

## Turnover

We found a teacher turnover rate of 24 percent in Texas prekindergarten programs, slightly below the level identified in most child care programs nationally (approximately 30 percent). Assistant teacher turnover, at six percent, was lower than that identified nationally. These average numbers are somewhat misleading, however, since turnover was concentrated in less than half of the programs in the study sample. Sixty-three percent of programs in the sample reported no teacher turnover at all in the last year, with the remaining 37 percent reporting rates of turnover from nine to 200 percent.

Due to the small sample size, we were unable to determine with any certainty why some Texas Pre-K programs had so much turnover, while others had little or none. While there were suggestive differences in levels of teacher turnover between programs whose highest wage was above the median (11% turnover) and those whose highest wage was below the median (40% turnover), these differences did not achieve statistical significance.

We also examined whether turnover differed among counties in the sample, but while it appeared to vary widely by region, it was not possible to detect a pattern with a sample of this size. Lubbock and Jefferson Counties appeared to have the highest teacher turnover (56 and 40 percent respectively), followed by 29 percent in Dallas County and 16 percent in Bexar County, but again, the difference was not statistically significant. Lubbock and Jefferson Counties are both



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smaller and more rural than Bexar County, which includes the city of San Antonio, and Dallas County, which includes Dallas. But programs in rural Tyler County, by contrast, reported no turnover all (0 percent).

**Figure 1: Annual Turnover of Teachers and Assistant Teachers**

| | Turnover | 0% ——— 100% |
|---|---|---|
| Teachers | 24% | |
| Assistant Teachers | 6% | |

## Principals' Views on Recruiting and Retaining Staff

Many principals, including those quoted below, noted very low turnover and identified no real challenges in this area, a view that is consistent with the finding that 63 percent of the programs had experienced no turnover in the last year.

*I never have a problem; we have lots of applicants, and there are always teachers available. We've been real fortunate and have a really good district. The district is starting to feel the national teacher shortage, but it has not affected Pre-K yet.*

*We haven't replaced anybody in 10 years. When one teacher passed away, we had 6-8 applicants. Teachers transfer in from other positions in the district.*

*It's easier to attract staff to teach at the Pre-K and kindergarten levels than it is to find teachers for older grades.*

While staff turnover did not appear to be a problem for many principals, most (57 percent) reported difficulties in recruiting staff who were able to meet the state prekindergarten educational requirements, specifically the Teaching Credential and the Early Childhood or Bilingual Endorsements. (See Figure 9.) Principals reported that they had to compete with other districts or develop new recruitment strategies to meet this need:

*The toughest [challenge] is making sure that at least one of the teachers is bilingual. Our school district does "cluster Pre-K"; we have kids from three elementary schools, so this is needed here.*

*It's hard to get certified teachers, especially in bilingual programs. That's the real challenge. We may have competition from neighboring cities because they pay higher salaries.*

*Finding bilingual teachers is a challenge. We meet this challenge and other recruiting challenges through networking with both the Texas Association of Principals and the Texas Association of Bilingual Teachers.*

Sixty-five percent of principals identified bilingual teachers as the most difficult group of candidates for Pre-K positions to recruit. When asked about state or other policies that could boost recruitment and retention, they identified bonuses for bilingual teachers as a helpful tool.

While most principals viewed the challenges of recruitment and retention as unchanged over the last three years, one third (30 percent) said that it had become a growing problem.[10] These principals identified class-size reductions in the elementary grades, and teaching shortages for all grades, as either affecting or having the potential to



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affect the supply of Pre-K teachers. Their comments included the following:

*The teacher shortage is growing at all grade levels. I spend more time on recruitment efforts now, such as attending college classes and going to job fairs. I didn't use to have to market my school.*

*It's more difficult now because of the Early Childhood Endorsement, and the fact that there are less and less people who want to become teachers. They have to train in a specialized area, so it takes more time, and Pre-K teachers are paid less than others.*[11]

*A large number of teachers are nearing or have reached retirement age. This has created a need for larger numbers of teachers in this populous state with changing populations.*

The principals who reported that recruitment and retention of skilled teaching staff had become more difficult in the last three years were more likely to be from schools in Dallas County, one of the two large urban areas in our sample.[12]

Principals identified as promising an alternative certification program in Texas that provides assistance to job candidates with bachelor's degrees but no certification.[13] Newly-passed legislation aimed at broadening health coverage for teachers was also identified by several principals as an important recruitment and retention strategy. Although they were in the minority, several principals indicated that improved school district or state funding to raise salaries and benefits would be an important recruitment tool for Pre-K teachers, who must meet steep educational requirements.

Table 8: Barriers to Recruiting and Retaining Staff: Responses from All Principals

| | |
|---|---|
| **Low wages** | 10% |
| **Inadequate benefits** | 0% |
| **Competition from kindergarten and other elementary school employers** | 5% |
| **Inadequate supply of staff who meet educational qualifications** | 57% |

## Summary

Our case study of the Texas prekindergarten program reveals certain trends in the provision of prekindergarten services through the public schools. The Texas program requires teachers to meet stringent educational standards, comparable to those for teachers of older children, and teacher salaries and benefits appeared to fall within the range of those offered to teachers in K-12 classrooms. Assistant teachers, however, the majority of whom had no formal training in early childhood education, earned much lower salaries than teachers. Without having access to or support for ongoing education, assistant teachers appeared unlikely to be able to meet the growing demand for qualified teachers that principals identified. Instead, assistants appeared to be consigned to lower-paid Pre-K positions requiring no training.

Annual teacher turnover of 24 percent, substantially higher than the six percent identified among K-12 teachers nationally, was concentrated in approximately one-third of the sample of programs. For this reason, many principals did not register staff instability as a significant concern. Recruiting new teachers, particularly those who are bilingual and meet other special educational criteria for Pre-K teaching, appeared to be a more urgent concern. Principals in Dallas County were most likely to see recruitment and retention of trained staff as a growing problem. Mindful of the broader teacher shortage in Texas, principals appeared supportive of initiatives that would improve compensation and benefits for teachers.



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## Endnotes

1 Personal communication with Cami Jones, Director, Early Childhood Education Division of Curriculum and Professional Development, Texas Education Association, May 22, 2001. No estimates of the number of non-public school programs are available.

2 Participants include at least one program from each county selected in the original sample, with the exception of Tyler County.

3 Schulman, Blank & Ewen, 1999. The program has remained largely unchanged in terms of being housed in public schools, and in its educational requirements for teachers. One significant alteration, however, was a 1995 legislative change giving local school districts, rather than the state, the authority to set Pre-K curriculum guidelines.

4 A high school degree or enrollment in an early childhood career program approved by the Texas Education Agency, such as the Child Development Associate (CDA) or Child Development Professional (CDP), qualifies one as a teacher or assistant teacher in Texas child care programs (Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, 2000).

5 Data were not collected on the qualifications or compensation of principals, since their job classification was determined to be substantively different from that of on-site directors and teacher-directors described in other states.

6 U.S. Department of Labor, 2000.

7 U.S. Department of Labor, 2000.

8 The two teachers in the sample with a bachelor's degree and no credential were from Bexar and Dallas Counties, respectively. The lowest starting wage in Bexar County for all teachers, for example, was $16.95, compared with $11.37 in Lubbock County.

9 A state bill passed after the time of our survey calls for fully-paid individual health coverage for all active school employees.

10 Eight percent of principals said that recruiting and retaining teachers was easier over the last three years, and 62 percent said that it had remained the same.

11 Prekindergarten teachers' salaries in our sample did not differ significantly from K-12 teachers, but certain school districts may compensate K-12 teachers at higher levels than prekindergarten teachers.

12 Fifty-nine percent of Dallas principals in our sample reported that recruiting skilled teaching staff had become more difficult, compared with no principals in Jefferson, Lubbock, and Tyler Counties; $p<.05$. Twenty-five percent of principals in Bexar County reported that it had become more difficult.

13 No data are available as to whether "alternatively credentialed" teachers differ from certified teachers in terms of turnover rates, job satisfaction or job performance.

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# Policy Implications of Study Findings, and Recommendations

This study found a striking disparity between publicly- and privately-operated prekindergarten programs in terms of the qualifications, compensation and stability of teaching staff. This disparity appears to reflect a long-standing split in the U.S. early care and education system between services that emphasize the needs of young children as learners (such as Head Start and other part-day preschool programs), and those that emphasize the work-related needs of families (such as full-day, year-round child care centers, and child care initiatives related to welfare reform).

State-funded prekindergarten services have been largely prompted by the former concern – i.e., the early learning needs of young children, especially those considered to be at risk of later underachievement in elementary school. But this split between two kinds of services is being particularly played out in states where Pre-K programs are housed both in public schools and in the community-based child care system. Pre-K programs based in public schools have generally been able to maintain a stable cohort of well-trained teaching staff, which is a fundamental element in meeting the learning needs of young children, but have often been less successful in assuring the full-day, year-round services that many families need. Privately-operated child care settings, on the other hand, have often been better at supplementing part-day Pre-K programs with full-time services for working families, but have often been less able to recruit and retain a well-qualified teaching staff.

The key question, however, is not whether it is inherently better for children and families when states place prekindergarten services in the public schools or in the privately-operated child care system. Both approaches can provide excellent early care and education for children, as well as appropriate services for families, and both, as it currently stands, also face significant shortcomings. The essential question is one of equal standards, teacher qualifications and compensation in all segments of a Pre-K service delivery system, and this is nowhere clearer than in states that have used a combination of settings in which to house prekindergarten services. Equity of standards is therefore the starting point of the following policy recommendations.

*Set equal standards for all settings within states' prekindergarten service delivery systems, and provide sufficient resources for programs to implement them – particularly regarding the qualifications and compensation of teaching staff.*

Mixed delivery systems should be governed by a common set of standards, operating principles and ground rules. In particular, to ensure the presence of stable, well-qualified teaching staff across all programs, teaching staff in both privately- and publicly-operated Pre-K programs should receive equal compensation for equal qualifications, education and training.

- ***Privately-operated, child care-based services:*** When Pre-K efforts are grafted onto an underfunded child care system, without attention to reaching parity with the standards and resources of public school districts, the results for child care-based settings are lower compensation, poorer success in recruiting qualified teachers, and higher teaching staff turnover, all of which jeopardize the preschool learning experiences that prompted the programs' creation. In this scenario, privately-operated Pre-K services essentially become the lower tier of a two-tier system, a training ground from which teachers move into positions in the better-funded public school system as soon as they are able.

- ***Publicly-operated, school-based services:*** Public school districts may also need additional support in appropriately meeting the needs of working families with full-year and full-day ("wrap-around") care. Of the five states examined in this study, the almost exclusively school-based Texas Prekindergarten Program offers the best example of providing such services in school settings.

*Integrate Pre-K programs more fully into the larger public or private systems in which they operate.*

As indicated in Finding 5, both publicly- and privately-operated prekindergarten programs have had mixed success in integrating their teaching staff into existing service delivery systems. Without such integration, teachers are less able to do their jobs effectively, have fewer opportunities for professional development and career advancement, and are likely to experience less job satisfaction.

- ***Privately-operated, child care-based services:*** Prekindergarten funding and administration should allow for equitable sharing of training opportunities, classroom supplies and other resources between Pre-K and other staff, when Pre-K services are housed within child care centers or other privately-operated community agencies. Chicago has developed a particularly successful model of such integration, blending Pre-K and other funding to provide all children at community agency sites with a full day of quality early care and education. Administrators also appeared to use Pre-K funding to address the quality of work life for all child care staff, sharing state-funded Pre-K resources among all classrooms and improving benefits (and in some cases, pay scales) for all staff. The Georgia Office of School Readiness has also made a notable effort to provide training for all teaching staff in centers housing privately-operated Pre-K programs, in an attempt to "raise the bar" of educational attainment and support the overall quality of the centers.

- ***Publicly-operated, school-based services:*** Prekindergarten programs housed in public schools should be treated as equal partners with the upper grades in providing quality education for children and in offering professional advancement opportunities for teaching staff. The leadership of school principals is particularly important in this regard; without it, Pre-K staff frequently feel unappreciated and unfairly treated within public schools. Decisions about the availability of classroom space and other school resources should also be made equitably for Pre-K programs and upper grades.

*Provide adequate training for directors of Pre-K settings in serving this population of children.*

While not all states require Pre-K site directors to complete training in early childhood education, such training is an essential element of Pre-K quality. In public school settings that house Pre-K programs, principals should have training in understanding the methods and goals of early childhood education, serving this population of children appropriately, appreciating the professionalism of prekindergarten teachers, and integrating Pre-K programs into the schools.

*Ensure appropriate access and support for teachers in meeting state Pre-K training requirements.*

A number of states providing publicly-funded prekindergarten services are now engaged in upgrading the training and education requirements of Pre-K teachers, in some cases bringing them closely into line with those of kindergarten and elementary school teachers. In states that house Pre-K programs in a combination of publicly- and privately-operated settings, however, disparities in funding and other resources can make it very difficult for privately-operated programs to meet these increased requirements and to compete with the public schools in recruiting and retaining teaching staff. States should address any such inequities by ensuring that all Pre-K teaching staff, wherever they work, have appropriate access to and financial support for pursuing and completing the professional training that is required of them.

# Appendix: Study Design and Methodology

## Sampling Strategy

We employed a similar sampling strategy in each state, conducting a stratified random sample from administrative data, but altering our approach depending on each state's available information about the universe of prekindergarten programs. In each state, we selected a random sample of Pre-K programs within counties specifically chosen to represent urban, suburban and rural communities; our goals were to reflect each state's geographical diversity, as well as the variety of program auspices of state-funded Pre-K services.[1] The use of stratified random sampling ensured that geographical variations would be present in our final sample of participating programs.[2]

Each state maintained a database of its Pre-K programs, but these varied in form and composition, and this variation had consequences for our sampling strategy and ultimate sample size. The most significant difference among the five states' lists of Pre-K services was whether the lists were composed of single agencies overseeing multiple sites, herein referred to as "programs," or by individual sites, herein called "sites." In New York, for example, we sampled respondents from a list of multi-site programs, and thus each Pre-K entity on the list represented a number of sites, whereas in Chicago, Georgia and Texas, we sampled respondents from a list of individual Pre-K sites, some of which were affiliated with multiple-site programs. In California, the lists contained a combination of programs and sites. (See Table 1.) Specific issues related to sampling Pre-K programs in each of the states, as well as response rates, are discussed below.[3]

Table 1: Five-State Sample

| | TOTAL POPULATION OF PRE-K PROGRAMS IN STATE/CITY | SAMPLE OF PROGRAMS RECRUITED | SITES REPRESENTED IN RECRUITED SAMPLE | PROGRAM RESPONSE RATE | PROGRAMS INTERVIEWED | SITES INTERVIEWED |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| California | 342 | 60 | 246 | 87% | 52 | 211 |
| Chicago | 397 | 90 | 94 | 80% | 72 | 76 |
| Georgia | 804 | 140 | 217 | 76% | 107 | 169 |
| New York Experimental Prekindergarten | 130 | 50 | 123 | 68% | 34 | 89 |
| New York Universal Prekindergarten | 126 | 90 | 668 | 54% | 49 | 127 |
| Texas | * | 122 | 126 | 34% | 41 | 41 |

* The total number of Texas prekindergarten programs is not available from any source. Prekindergarten programs are reportedly offered by the majority of the 1,056 school districts in the state.





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## California

All Pre-K programs in four California counties (Kern, San Diego, Santa Clara and Shasta) were selected to participate. These counties were chosen to represent the Northern, Bay Area, Southern and Central Valley regions of the state, and to provide a balance of rural, urban and suburban communities in the sample. Eighty-six percent of programs agreed to participate. Refusals were spread evenly throughout the target counties.

Lists of Pre-K programs in California were obtained from the State Department of Education, Child Development Division (CDD), which oversees Pre-K contracts. Information about the total population size of Pre-K sites in California was not available at the time of the study from CDD, which tracks program contracts only, or from any other source. As shown in Figure 2, school districts and community-based nonprofit programs are eligible to receive California state funding to operate Pre-K programs. CDD estimates that 75 percent or more of these programs are operated by public school districts, with the remainder located in community-based nonprofit agencies, public universities and community colleges.

## Chicago, Illinois

The Illinois Board of Education, which oversees the state prekindergarten program, reports that 90 percent or more of Illinois Pre-K programs are operated by public school districts, with the remainder operated by nonprofit child care agencies or Head Start. In Chicago, however, a more sizeable proportion of programs are operated by nonprofit community-based agencies holding subcontracts from the school district to provide prekindergarten services. Chicago was selected because it offered a compelling case study of differences within one community between programs operated by public school districts and those operated by community-based organizations.

The Chicago Public Schools oversee 309 public school-based and 88 community-based prekindergarten sites. We oversampled the community-based prekindergarten sites in Chicago to permit comparisons between public school and community-based programs. Lists of individual Pre-K sites in Chicago were obtained from the Chicago Public Schools.

Table 2: California Sample

| SAMPLE OF PROGRAMS RECRUITED | SITES REPRESENTED IN RECRUITED SAMPLE | PROGRAMS INTERVIEWED | SITES INTERVIEWED |
|---|---|---|---|
| 60 | 246 | 52 | 211 |

Table 3: Chicago Sample

| SAMPLE OF PROGRAMS RECRUITED | SITES REPRESENTED IN RECRUITED SAMPLE | PROGRAMS INTERVIEWED | SITES INTERVIEWED |
|---|---|---|---|
| 90 | 94 | 72 | 76 |

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## Georgia

We selected just over one-third (39 percent) of Pre-K sites in the Georgia counties of Baldwin, Bibb, DeKalb, Fulton, Gwinett, Jones, Paulding, Peach and Tift. These counties represent urban and suburban communities in the Atlanta metropolitan area, as well as smaller cities and rural areas in central and southern Georgia. All sites in the rural counties of Baldwin, Jones, Peach and Tift were selected to ensure adequate representation of these counties that have only a small number of state-funded Pre-K sites.

All program auspices, including for-profit, community-based nonprofit, faith-based nonprofit and school district programs, are eligible to receive Georgia Pre-K funds, and are included in the findings.

The list of Pre-K sites in the state was obtained from the Georgia Department of Education, Office of School Readiness (OSR), which oversees the state-sponsored Pre-K program. OSR reports that 44 percent of all prekindergartens are operated by public school districts, with the remainder operated by nonprofit child care agencies, Head Start, faith-based centers, or for-profit independent or chain child care centers.

## New York

New York currently operates two distinct types of Pre-K programs: the Experimental Pre-K Program (EPK) and the Universal Pre-K Program (UPK). EPK is provided at the local level exclusively by public school districts, whereas UPK can be provided either by school districts or by community-based programs. Approximately 65 percent of UPKs are operated by public school districts, with the remainder operated by nonprofit child care agencies, for-profit centers, family child care providers, and private schools. Both types of programs were included in the study sample.

Fifty EPKs and sixty-five UPK school districts were randomly selected from 36 of the 45 counties in New York. Most EPKs in New York are large, centrally administered programs overseen by public school districts. UPKs were oversampled to ensure the inclusion of a sufficient number of community-based programs. The New York State Department of Education, which oversees the EPK and UPK programs, supplied the list of all Pre-K programs from which the sample was selected.

Table 4: Georgia Sample

| SAMPLE OF PROGRAMS RECRUITED | SITES REPRESENTED IN RECRUITED SAMPLE | PROGRAMS INTERVIEWED | SITES INTERVIEWED |
|---|---|---|---|
| 140 | 217 | 78 | 126 |

Table 5: New York Sample

| | SAMPLE OF PROGRAMS RECRUITED | SITES REPRESENTED IN RECRUITED SAMPLE | PROGRAMS INTERVIEWED | SITES INTERVIEWED |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Experimental Prekindergarten** | 50 | 123 | 34 | 89 |
| **Universal Prekindergarten** | 90 | 384 | 49 | 127 |



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## Texas

Pre-K programs in Texas are operated exclusively through public school sites, primarily elementary schools. Dallas, Bexar, Jefferson, Lubbock and Tyler Counties were selected to provide a balance of urban, suburban and rural school districts, and a balance of regions throughout Texas. Dallas County, which includes the city of Dallas, and Bexar County, which includes San Antonio, together provide a view of large metropolitan areas containing a combination of urban and suburban school districts. Thirty percent of individual Pre-K sites in Dallas and Bexar Counties were selected to participate in the study, and all of the Pre-K sites in the smaller rural counties were selected to ensure an adequate representation of rural sites.

The final Texas response rate was markedly lower than in other states. Elementary school principals are typically the sole site-level administrators of Texas Pre-K programs, and do not have access to information about the salaries and educational attainment of Pre-K teaching staff; nor are they responsible for recruiting and retaining staff. As a result, principals could not respond to the majority of the interview questions. A variety of school district personnel who have access to compensation and educational background data on school district staff, including Pre-K teachers, were reluctant to provide information they perceived as confidential.

## Telephone Survey Interviews

The telephone survey for site and program directors that was developed for use in this study was adapted from measures used in the study, *Then and Now: Changes in Child Care Staffing, 1994-2000* (Whitebook et al., 2001), and in state and local child care center studies conducted by the Center for the Child Care Workforce. Directors were asked to provide information about the compensation, professional background and demographic characteristics of teachers, assistant teachers and on-site administrative directors employed by their Pre-K program or site, as well as to characterize their programs' auspices, funding levels, and daily, weekly and yearly schedules. We also asked open-ended questions regarding directors' experiences with recruiting and retaining teaching staff. On average, the interview required 45 minutes to complete. Interviewers were instructed to call each respondent at least ten times before abandoning that particular effort. Prior to data collection, the instrument underwent a total of 15 pilot interviews in the study sample's five states, in order to test the applicability of the questions' content and wording for each state.

Interviewers were trained by study researchers in how to administer the interview instrument, including the use of probing questions and other open-ended interviewing techniques. Interviewers were

Table 6: Texas Sample

| SAMPLE OF PROGRAMS RECRUITED | SITES REPRESENTED IN RECRUITED SAMPLE | PROGRAMS INTERVIEWED | SITES INTERVIEWED |
|---|---|---|---|
| 122 | 126 | 37 | 41 |



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provided with written protocols prior to beginning data collection, and were convened throughout the data collection period to ensure consistency in technique, with the goal of increasing the reliability of the responses.

A majority of interviews (N=250) were conducted with administrators of single Pre-K sites. In some cases, however, directors who oversaw several sites were the most knowledgeable respondents about the compensation levels and characteristics of staff at these sites, and thus provided information for the multiple sites under their direction (N=99). A larger proportion of interviews with directors of multi-site programs were conducted in California (58 percent) and New York (29 percent) than in the other states.

## Qualitative Study of Pre-K Programs in Chicago and Georgia

We also conducted a qualitative study of Pre-K programs in Georgia and Chicago in order to identify the effect of trends in staff education, compensation, recruitment and retention on Pre-K program staff in these two states.

The Chicago and Georgia prekindergarten programs were selected for this qualitative investigation because they represented programs with distinctive and contrasting policies, and thus offered two very different models of programs in operation today: a public school-based prekindergarten system, and one anchored in a wide variety of community-based and public school sites.

Established in 1985 to serve at-risk children, the Chicago prekindergarten program is based in the public schools, with educational requirements for staff commensurate with those required of public elementary school teachers, and primarily employing unionized, credentialed teachers whose compensation is on par with teachers of older children.

The Georgia Prekindergarten Program, begun a decade later than the Illinois program, is available to all four-year-olds in the state, and more than half of its sites are operated by community-based child care centers. As a relatively new program that grew quickly to serve a large number of children, the Georgia prekindergarten program features a diverse delivery system, modest teacher educational requirements (which will be increased in the 2002-03 academic year), wide variations in compensation, and no teacher unionization.

As states such as Illinois contemplate the staffing and funding challenges of extending prekindergarten services to all four-year-olds, and as states such as Georgia with "universal" Pre-K efforts in place grapple with inequities in staff education and compensation resulting, in part, from a diverse delivery system, we determined that a detailed exploration of these two very different programs would be enlightening to policy makers and researchers alike.

Within these two study sites, we explored differences between school district and community-based programs through open-ended interviews and focus groups. One-hour focus groups were conducted with separate groupings of teaching and administrative staff in Chicago and Atlanta, using the same sets of questions in both study sites. A total of seven focus groups were conducted with the following prekindergarten stakeholders: public school teaching staff, public school principals,[4] community-based agency teaching staff, and community-based agency directors.

A total of 13 teaching staff and ten administrators participated in the focus groups. Participants were representative with respect to age and ethnicity of prekindergarten teaching and administrative staff in their communities.[5] The administrator focus groups were conducted during the day; teaching staff participants, who attended evening groups, received a $25 stipend for their participation. The Chicago Public Schools provided a list of all school district and community-based agencies offering prekindergarten in the city, and programs were randomly selected to participate. The Georgia State University Applied Research Center, which was concurrently conducting a study of prekindergarten programs, provided a list of administrators and teaching staff participating in their study, and facilitated their involvement in our study.

State and city policy makers, administrators and advocates were interviewed by telephone to explore the history, policies and future trends of state prekindergarten staffing in school district and community-based programs in Chicago and Georgia. Interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to one hour.

**Interview respondents in Chicago included:**

- The administrator of early childhood education for the Chicago Public Schools;
- The manager of subcontracted prekindergarten programs for the Chicago Public Schools;
- The Executive Director of the Chicago Metro Association for the Education of Young Children;
- The Assistant Director of the Illinois Child Care Resource and Referral Network; and
- The Director of the Day Care Action Council.

**Interview respondents in Georgia included:**

- Officials from the Office of School Readiness, including the Acting Director, the Head Start Collaborative Director, and a Program Manager for the prekindergarten program;
- A Strategic Planner from the Georgia Early Learning Initiative;
- The Executive Director of the Georgia Association for the Education of Young Children;
- The Director of the Georgia Child Care Association; and
- The Director of the Georgia Childcare Leadership Forum.

**Plan of Analysis for Survey Interviews**

Initially, we compiled descriptive data for each state, including demographic characteristics, educational attainments and salaries of Pre-K teachers, assistant teachers and on-site administrators; program characteristics such as auspice, funding sources, schedules (daily, weekly and annual), employee benefit levels, and staff turnover; and the attitudes of respondents regarding staff recruitment and retention.

We then used t-tests, analysis of variance and chi squares to explore the relationships between the salaries of staff, their educational attainments, and reported staff turnover by program. Differences between staff working in school district or community-based Pre-Ks were analyzed along the dimensions of educational attainment and salary with the use of these tests. When present, variance in program characteristics by public or private auspices was also analyzed.

Open-ended responses to the director interview questions regarding recruiting and retaining staff were coded and analyzed to identify significant variations in directors' opinions and experiences with staffing.

## Endnotes

1 In New York, we selected counties randomly from a statewide list of school districts holding prekindergarten contracts, rather than targeting specific counties. In Illinois, we studied Pre-K programs only within the city of Chicago.

2 The exception to this approach occurred in the selection of New York programs; because of the smaller sample size of Pre-K programs identified for inclusion in the study, we sampled from the total population of programs. We did not stratify the sample by program auspice because of the paucity of available information on this subject. In Chicago, we did stratify the sample by auspice because we had information about the auspice of Pre-K sites. In other states, we selected a sufficiently large random sample to ensure that variations in program auspices would be reflected in the final sample.

3 A small number of prekindergarten programs included on the state lists were no longer in operation at the time of our interviews. The closures ranged from a low of 1 in Georgia to 3 in Chicago.

4 In Georgia, a public school prekindergarten principal was interviewed by telephone in lieu of a focus group discussion because of difficulties encountered in organizing a focus group discussion with these informants.

5 The ethnicity of the Chicago focus group participants was African American (4), European American (4), Latino (3) and Asian American (3). Most participants were over age 40 (11), with the remainder below age 40 (3). The ethnicity of the Georgia focus group participants was African American (4), European American (3) and Biracial (2). Seven participants were above age 40, and two were younger.

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